

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

SATURDAY, 24th FEBRUARY, 1934

Vol. II—No. 6

OFFICIAL REPORT



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, 24th February, 1934.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

GOLD EXPORTED FROM INDIA.

221. *Lala Rameshwar Prasad Bagla: Will Government please inform the House of the total exports of gold from India till February 10, 1934, giving its value in rupees and its quantity in tolas, since Britain went off the gold standard?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: Exports of gold between the 22nd of September, 1931, and the 31st of December, 1933, the latest date up to which Monthly Sea-borne Trade Accounts have been received, amounted to about 20½ million fine ounces, of an approximate value of Rs. 162½ crores.

SURCHARGE ON INCOME-TAX AND SUPER-TAX.

222. *Lala Rameshwar Prasad Bagla: (a) Will Government be pleased to state if they are thinking of doing away with the surcharge on income-tax and super-tax?

(b) Will Government kindly state if they have received any representations from public bodies and individuals to that effect and also the names of those who have submitted such representations?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: (a) I must ask the Honourable Member to await my Budget speech.

(b) One, from the Associated Chambers of Commerce.

ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION OF THE AJMER MUNICIPALITY.

223. *Bhai Parma Nand: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the administration of the Ajmer Municipality has been going from bad to worse and that it has become necessary to appoint an Enquiry Committee to investigate into its affairs?

(b) Is it a fact that the Ajmer Municipality appointed an Executive Officer in the year 1931, on a very high pay as compared with the small amount of pay he was receiving in another place and that the Municipality did not subsequently consider it worth while to invest the Executive Officer with the powers as suggested by the Chief Commissioner? If so, why?

(c) Is it a fact that certain irregularities were committed by the said Executive Officer, for which an explanation was demanded from him?

Mr. H. A. F. Metcalfe: (a) An Enquiry Committee has been appointed. (b) and (c). An enquiry on the subject has been made from the Local Administration, and a reply will be laid on the table in due course.

SHIFTING OF THE RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE TO ANOTHER BUILDING.

224. *Bhai Parma Nand: (a) Will Government be pleased to state what is the life fixed by engineers of the Clive Building, in which is located the Railway Clearing Accounts Office?

(b) Is it a fact that the life of the building is over, and if so, will Government please state why no steps have been taken so far by the authorities to shift the Railway Clearing Accounts Office to any other building?

(c) Do Government intend to shift the office from its present building to any other? Is it a fact that the last heavy rains and the recent earthquakes have badly damaged the building, and that it would be very dangerous to risk the lives of hundreds of people?

(d) If the reply to part (c) be in the affirmative, will Government please state when the office will be shifted?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I am informed that there is no perceptible damage to the building caused by the earthquake. Its condition was recently examined by an engineer who has reported that it is quite safe.

ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF COMMUNAL TENSION IN THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT AT CAWNPORE.

225. *Bhai Parma Nand: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware of the fact that a strong communal tension has been existing in the Postal Department at Cawnpore for sometime past, and also that some Hindu officials made representations to the Director General, and that their petitions were withheld by the Postmaster General?

(b) Is it a fact that giving promotions on communal grounds is contrary to Director General's letter No. A. M.-516/12/27, dated the 22nd November, 1933?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the rules regarding the appointments of Town Inspectors in first class Head Offices?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) The matter is under enquiry, and a reply will be laid on the table in due course.

(b) Yes, but the date of the Director-General's letter is 22nd November, 1927, and not 22nd November, 1933, as stated by the Honourable Member.

(c) No definite rules have been prescribed but the appointments are made by selection from amongst ordinary time-scale clerks of the General Post Office or first class Head Office group concerned.

FIXATION OF HOLIDAYS FOR DUSSEHRA AND DIWALI ON PROPER DAYS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES POSTAL CIRCLE.

226. *Bhai Parma Nand: (a) Are Government aware that Postal holidays for Dussehra and Diwali were not fixed on proper days in the United Provinces?

(b) Were any representation received from the staff regarding the change in dates in the Circle Office, and if so, why were not the dates changed?

(c) What action do Government propose to take for fixing the holidays for these Hindu festivals on right dates?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Information is being obtained and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

ALLOWANCES FOR LOWER DIVISION CLERKS IN THE POST OFFICES IN THE PUNJAB CIRCLE.

227. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** Is it a fact that no special pay or compensatory allowance is sanctioned for lower division clerks in the Post Offices in the Punjab Circle at places where it is sanctioned for all other classes of officials higher and lower? Will Government kindly state the reasons for this differential treatment and whether they propose to remove the anomaly?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: The fact is substantially as stated. Compensatory allowance or special pay is at present drawn by Posts and Telegraphs officials on ordinary clerical time-scales of pay serving in certain specified localities according to the orders of the Government of India issued from time to time. On account of the unsatisfactory state of the finances in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, the question of reducing the existing rates or of abolishing the allowance, wherever possible, is being investigated, and new grants of allowances either to clerks in the lower division of the clerical time-scale, which is of recent introduction, or to any other classes of officials have had to be refused generally in all Circles on the ground of the additional expenditure involved.

PAYMENT OF INCOME-TAX BY THE EMPLOYEES OF THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT SERVING IN THE KASHMIR STATE.

228. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** (a) Is it a fact that the Imperial Government Servants of the Posts and Telegraphs Department serving in the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State were exempted from the payment of income-tax before the year 1931?

(b) Is it a fact that such servants do not derive any benefit of the services for which the tax is utilised?

(c) Is it a fact that such servants have to pay other taxes in the shape of customs duty, etc., levied by the Kashmir Darbar?

(d) If the replies to parts (a), (b) and (c) be in the affirmative, do Government propose to consider why such servants should not be exempted from the payment of income-tax?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) No, only those servants of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department, who were State subjects, were exempted from the payment of Income-tax before the year 1931.

(b) No

(c) Yes.

(d) No. Government can see no reason for such exemption.

TRANSFERS MADE IN THE PUNJAB POSTAL CIRCLE FROM THE HIGHER TO THE LOWER SCALES OF PAY.

229. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** (a) Will Government kindly lay on the table a statement showing the number of transfers made in the Punjab Postal Circle from the higher to the lower scales of pay in connection with the retrenchment scheme for reasons other than inefficiency or misbehaviour?

(b) Are Government aware that such transfers are detrimental to the interest of the staff and create great hardships?

(c) Do Government propose to order the stoppage of such transfers and have the old cases reviewed in order to have the officials concerned restored to their original position?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Information has been called for and will be laid on the table in due course.

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE SORTERS.

230. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** (a) Is it a fact that when casual leave is granted to Railway Mail Service sorters, they are required to pay extra duty allowance to those who work in their place, and that this is not the case with officials of other Departments?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the affirmative, do Government propose to consider the advisability of removing this grievance of the sorters by increasing the number of reserve sorters?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) The fact is not as stated. On the contrary, in July 1932, instructions were issued by the Director-General to Heads of Postal Circles to the effect that the distribution of the leave reserve staff in a Railway Mail Service division should be made so as not to put a sorter unnecessarily on double duty and also to permit the grant to a sorter of casual leave by arranging for a leave reserve sorter to work in the vacancy without requiring the absentee to make any payment on account of his substitute.

(b) Does not arise.

LOANS ON POSTAL INSURANCE POLICIES.

231. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** (a) Are Government aware that all private companies dealing with life insurance work advance loans to the insureds on certain conditions?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the affirmative, do Government propose to extend this system to the Post Offices which carry on insurance business?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Government understand that this is the case.

(b) As loans up to the surrender value in each case can be obtained from any bank on the security of policies, Government do not propose to introduce the system of granting loans in the Postal Insurance Fund, which is intended to give special facilities to Government servants and persons of analogous position for making a provision for their families and not unnecessarily to compete with private business.

PREPONDERANCE OF THE MEMBERS OF ONE COMMUNITY IN CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS IN THE PUNJAB POSTAL CIRCLE.

232. *Bhai Parma Nand: Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that in the cadres of postmen, mail peons, letter-box peons, runners and line staff, in every division and in the first class Head Offices in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province Postal Circle, the members of only one community preponderate?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Government have no precise information regarding the particular classes of staff mentioned by the Honourable Member, as distinct from other staff of similar categories, but if (1) postmen, village postmen, departmental branch postmasters, overseers, overseer-postmen, head, sorting and roader postmen are taken as one category, and (2) all inferior servants (including mail peons, letter box peons and runners) as another category, the reply is in the negative.

COMMUNITIES OF THE TELEPHONE INSPECTORS IN THE DELHI TELEGRAPH ENGINEERING DIVISION.

233. *Bhai Parma Nand: Is it a fact that out of six existing appointments of the Telephone Inspectors in the Delhi Telegraph Engineering Division, five are held by the members of one community and that two new vacancies also have been given to the members of the same community, ignoring the claims of senior members belonging to other community?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. I would remind the Honourable Member that these posts are filled by selection and not on communal considerations. As regards the second part, the fact is substantially as stated by the Honourable Member. As regards the third part, if the senior officials referred to consider that they have a grievance, it is open to them to represent it to the proper authority through the usual official channel.

STOPPAGE OF THE INCREMENT OF A TELEGRAPHIST IN THE PUNJAB POSTAL CIRCLE.

234. *Bhai Parma Nand: Is it a fact that a telegraphist of the Lahore Telegraph Office falsified his out-turn slips on five different occasions in the months of August and September, 1933, while the increment of another telegraphist in the Punjab Circle belonging to another community, who committed one offence in 1931, was stopped for six months?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Government have no information, but a copy of the question has been sent to the local authority concerned for such action as he may consider necessary.

PURCHASE OF WAGONS BY THE SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY.

235. *Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the South Indian Railway has been given sanction to purchase 282 broad gauge wagons at a total cost of Rs. 13 lakhs during 1934-35?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, has the sanction been accorded on the plea of meeting the additional traffic that may arise due to the conversion of the Shoranur-Cochin Railway into broad gauge?

(c) Will Government please state whether the terms of the original agreement with the Cochin Durbar did not contemplate that funds for all capital expenditure on the Shoranur-Cochin Railway, (including rolling stock), should always be provided by the Durbar?

(d) If the answer to part (c) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the reason or reasons for which the South Indian Railway has been charged to defray the expenses for the capital expenditure on behalf of the Cochin Durbar in contravention of the terms originally agreed upon?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) Provision has been made in the estimates now before the House.

(b) Yes.

(c) and (d). I would draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the memorandum on the subject placed before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways published in Volume X, No. 5, of their proceedings.

PURCHASE OF DIESEL ELECTRIC CARS BY THE MADRAS AND SOUTHERN MAHRATTA RAILWAY.

236. ***Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that four lakhs of rupees have been sanctioned for the purchase of six Diesel electric cars by the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway;
- (b) if so, the special reason or reasons therefor;
- (c) whether in working out the comparative costs between rail and motor services in connection with that project, the costs of spare engines and motor have been taken into account;
- (d) whether also as a set-off against the above item, the costs of locomotives and carriages under repairs have been excluded in the estimated cost of the steam train service?

Mr. P. R. Rau: With your permission, Sir, I shall reply to questions Nos. 236 and 237 together. Full information about this proposal is contained in a memorandum placed before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways on the 2nd of February, 1934, which will be found in pages 12-14 of Vol. X, No. 5, of their proceedings.

PURCHASE OF DIESEL ELECTRIC CARS BY THE MADRAS AND SOUTHERN MAHRATTA RAILWAY.

237. ***Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) whether or not the Agent of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway strongly pleaded for the purchase of the six Diesel electric cars on the plea of counteracting road transport competition on a certain section of that system;
- (b) whether that officer was of the definite opinion that that sort of experiment would prove an unqualified success?

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 236.

USE OF DIESEL ELECTRIC CARS AND LOCOMOTIVES.

238. ***Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) whether or not the use of Diesel electric cars is still in the experimental stage;
- (b) whether or not two Diesel electric locomotives were recently purchased for the North Western Railway;
- (c) whether or not the experiment on that system with those engines proved a failure; and
- (d) whether or not similar sort of experiment with Diesel engines proved unsuccessful with the Mysore Railway?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) Yes, at least in India.

(b) and (c). I presume my Honourable friend refers to the two locomotives the purchase of which the Standing Finance Committee approved in May 1933. These have not actually been purchased, but tenders have been called for. The experiment has yet to be made.

(d) I am not aware of any similar experiment on the Mysore Railway which has failed.

PURCHASE OF DIESEL ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES BY THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY.

239. ***Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) the precise terms of the Memorandum which the Railway Board made when the Great Indian Peninsula Railway mooted a proposal for the purchase of Diesel electric locomotives in 1933;
- (b) whether they have considered that the use of that type of locomotive may prove a success where there is scarcity of water-supply or where the coal fields are at a distance?

Mr. P. R. Rau: My Honourable friend is presumably thinking of the memorandum which was placed before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways in regard to the purchase of two Diesel electric locomotives on the North Western Railway. If so, it will be found in pages 55-57 of Vol. X, No. 1, of their proceedings. I am not aware of any proposals for the purchase of such locomotives for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

REDUCTION IN FARES OF BUSES IN DELHI.

240. ***Bhagat Chandi Mal Gola:** (a) Are Government aware that the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company are running buses between Delhi and New Delhi?

(b) What were the original fares between any two halting places?

(c) Is it a fact that the fares have been increased between Gol Market and Paharganj, and Paharganj and Kutub Road? Will Government please lay on the table a statement showing the causes for the increase in fares?

(d) Are Government aware that the buses are practically running empty between the places mentioned?

(e) Is it also a fact that the Company intend to reduce the fares when the Government of India move to Simla?

(f) Do Government intend to intervene and get the fares reduced for the comfort of their men now? If not, why not?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: (a) Yes.

(b) A copy of the list of fares is laid on the table.

(c) There has been no increase in the fare between the Gol Market and Paharganj. The fare between Paharganj and the Kutub Road, which was reduced from three to two pice, has been restored to the former level.

(d) and (e). No.

(f) Government see no reason to take any action in the matter.

DELHI ELECTRIC SUPPLY AND TRACTION CO., LTD.

(INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND.)

Omnibus Time Table.

SERVICE No. 1.

NEW DELHI POST OFFICE TO KASHMERE GATE.

8.15	8.45	9.15	9.45	10.15	10.45	11.15	12.15	1.15
2.15	3.15	3.45	4.15	4.45	5.15	5.45	6.15	6.45
7.15	7.45	8.15	8.45	9.15	to Kutab Road only.			

Buses leave for Kashmere Gate.

From Gol Market	5 minutes	} After times given above.
From Connaught Place	8 „	
From Kutab Road	15 „	
From Dufferin Bridge	20 „	
Arr. Kashmere Gate	25 „	

KASHMERE GATE TO NEW DELHI POST OFFICE.

8.15	8.45	9.15	9.45	10.15	10.45	11.45	12.45	1.45
2.45	3.45	4.15	4.45	5.15	5.45	6.15	6.45	7.15
7.45	8.15	8.45	9.15	to Kutab Road only.				

Buses leave for New Delhi Post Office.

From Dufferin Bridge	8 minutes	} After times given above.
From Kutab Road	10 "	
From Connaught Place	17 "	
From Gol Market	20 "	

SERVICE No. 2.

TIMARPUR TO FOUNTAIN.

8.30	9.0	9.30	10.0	10.30	11.0
12.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.30	4.0
4.30	5.0	5.30	6.0	6.30	7.0
7.30	8.0	8.30	9.0	9.30	

Buses leave for Fountain.

From The Mall	4 minutes	} After times given above.
From Old Secretariat	7 "	
From Metcalfe Road	10 "	
From Delhi Club	11 "	
From Kudsia Road	13 "	
From Kashmere Gate	16 "	
From General Post Office	20 "	

FOUNTAIN TO TIMARPUR.

8.30	9.0	9.30	10.0	10.30	11.30
12.30	1.30	2.30	3.0	3.30	4.0
4.30	5.0	5.30	6.0	6.30	7.0
7.30	8.0	8.30	9.0		

Buses leave for Timarpur.

From General Post Office	5 minutes.	} After times given above.
From Kashmere Gate	10 "	
From Kudsia Road	12 "	
From Delhi Club	13 "	
From Metcalfe Road	15 "	
From Old Secretariat	18 "	
From The Mall	21 "	

SERVICE No. 3.

HAUZ KAZI TO GOL MARKET.

8.30 9.10 9.50 10.30 and then between
3.30 P.M. to 8.50 P.M. every 40 minutes.

The bus leaving at 9.50 A.M. will run through to New Secretariat.

GOL MARKET TO HAUZ KAZI.

8.50 9.30 10.10 10.50 and then between

3.50 P.M. and 9.10 P.M. every 40 minutes.

The bus leaving at 4.30 P.M. will start from New Secretariat.

SERVICE No. 5.

KUTAB ROAD—PAHARGUNJ BAZAR—GOL MARKET.

From Kutab Road—

Between 8 A.M. and 9.20 P.M. every 20 minutes.

From Gol Market—

Between 8 A.M. and 9.40 P.M. every 20 minutes.

Mornings and evenings on office days this service will be extended between Timarpur and New Delhi to the following timings :—

MORNINGS.—Gol Market to Timarpur *via* Rajpur Road 9.0, 9.20 and 9.30 A.M.

EVENINGS.—New Secretariat to Timarpur 4.30 and 5.0 P.M.

Saturdays 2.0 and 2.30 P.M.

MORNINGS.—Timarpur to New Delhi Secretariat direct 9.30, 9.50, 10 A.M.

EVENINGS.—Timarpur to Gol Market 5 and 5.30 P.M.

Saturdays 2.30 and 3.0 P.M.

L. O. FULLER,

*General Manager.**December, 1933.*

FARE LIST.

SERVICE No. 1.

3 *Pice*.

Kashmere Gate—Clearing Accounts Office
 Dufferin Bridge—Qutab Road.
 Qutab Road—Pahargunj.
 Pahargunj—Gol Market.
 Connaught Place (Near Lady Hardinge)—
 New Delhi Post Office.
 New Delhi Post Office—Secretariat.

2 *Annas*.

Kashmere Gate—Connaught Place (Near
 Lady Hardinge).
 Clearing Accounts Office—Gol Market.
 Qutab Road—Secretariat.

2½ *Annas*.

Kashmere Gate—Gol Market.
 Dufferin Bridge—New Delhi Post Office.

4 *Pice*.

Kashmere Gate—Tis Hazari.
 Tis Hazari—Pahargunj.
 Qutab Road—Connaught Place (Near
 Lady Hardinge).
 Secretariat—Gol Market.

3 *Annas*.

Kashmere Gate—New Delhi Post Office or
 Secretariat.

5 *Pice*.

Kashmere Gate—Qutab Road.
 Dufferin Bridge—Pahargunj.
 Clearing Accounts Office—Connaught
 Place (Near Lady Hardinge).
 Qutab Road—Gol Market.

SERVICE No. 2.

3 *Pice*—

Fountain—Kashmere Gate (Church).
 General Post Office—Kudsia Road.
 Kashmere Gate (Church)—Metcalfe House
 Road.
 Kudsia Road—Old Secretariat (Centre
 Gate).
 Metcalfe House Road—The Mall Junction.
 Old Secretariat (Centre Gate)—Timarpur.

6 *Pice*.

Kashmere Gate—Pahargunj.
 Pahargunj—New Secretariat.
 Dufferin Bridge—Connaught Place (Near
 Lady Hardinge).

FARE LIST—*contd.*

4 Pice.

Fountain—Kudsia Road.
General Post Office—Metcalf House Road.
Kashmere Gate (Church)—Old Secretariat (Centre Gate).
Kudsia Road—The Mall Junction.
Metcalf House Road—Timarpur.

5 Pice.

Fountain—Metcalf House Road.
Kashmere Gate (Church)—The Mall Junction.
General Post Office—Old Secretariat (Centre Gate).
Kudsia Road—Timarpur.

6 Pice.

Fountain—The Mall Junction.
General Post Office—Timarpur.

2 Annas.

Fountain—Timarpur.

SERVICE No. 3.

3 Pice.

Hauz Qazi—Government Press.
Ajmeri Gate—Connaught Place.
Minto Corner—Regal Theatre.
Government Press—Municipal Office.
Regal Theatre—Assembly House.
Municipal Office—New Secretariat.

4 Pice.

Hauz Qazi—Regal Theatre.
Ajmere Gate—Municipal Office.
Government Press—Assembly House.
Regal Theatre—New Secretariat.
Hauz Qazi—Paharganj.

5 Pice.

Hauz Qazi—Municipal Office.
Ajmere Gate—Assembly House.
Government Press—New Secretariat.

6 Pice.

Hauz Qazi—Assembly House.
Ajmere Gate—New Secretariat.
Hauz Qazi—Gol Market.

2 Annas.

Hauz Qazi—New Secretariat.

SERVICE No. 5.

3 Pice.

Timarpur—Flagstaff Road.
The Mall—Underhill Road.
Underhill Road—Tis Hazari.
Court Road—Qutab Road.
Kutab Road—Pahargunj (Chhe Toti).
Pahargunj Bazar—Baird Road Panch Kuin Road.
Pahargunj (Chhe Toti)—Gol Market.
Pahargunj Bazar—Gol Market.

4 Pice.

Timarpur—Underhill Road.
Flagstaff Road—Tis Hazari.
Kutab Road—Baird Road Panch Kuin Road.

5 Pice.

Timarpur—Court Road.
Court Road—Pahargunj.
Kutab Road—Gol Market.

6 Pice.

Timarpur—Tis Hazari.
Flag Staff Road—Kutab Road.

2 Annas.

Timarpur—Kutab Road.
Flagstaff Road—Pahargunj.
Underhill Road—Connaught Place.

2½ Annas.

Timarpur—Pahargunj.
Flagstaff Road—Gol Market.
Tis Hazari—New Secretariat.

3 Annas.

Timarpur—Connaught Place or Gol Market.
Underhill Road—New Secretariat.

3½ Annas.

Timarpur—New Delhi Post Office or Secretariat.

STRENGTH OF THE TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT ON STATE AND COMPANY-MANAGED RAILWAYS.

241 *Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Will Government please state:

- (a) the total strength of the Telegraph Department on each of the State and Company-managed Railways, separately, with reference to those employees drawing Rs. 80 and upwards per mensem; and

- (b) how many Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Hindus, Muslims and other classes are employed in the Telegraph Department of each of these Railways drawing the above rates of pay?

Mr. P. R. Rau: The information is not readily available and its compilation will involve an amount of labour which, in the opinion of Government, is incommensurate with its value when collected.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE WIRELESS SERVICE UNDER THE CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

242. ***Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney:** (a) Will Government please state if it is a fact that there is a separate wireless service in existence under the control and administration of the North Western Railway, with its terminal stations at Delhi Fort and Lahore?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, will Government please state whether or not it is a fact that none but *ex*-soldiers of the British Army are employed in that service as operators and that the initial salary of such employees is Rs. 175 per mensem?

(c) If the answer to part (b) be in the affirmative, will Government please state whether other communities are eligible for employment in this branch of the telegraph service? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I am obtaining information and will lay a reply on the table in due course.

PAY OF INDIAN STATE RAILWAY SERVANTS.

243. ***Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney:** Will Government please state whether the principle contained in the Railway Board's announcement issued from Delhi on the 21st December, 1933, regarding the pay of Indian State Railway servants, whether permanent, temporary or officiating since July 15th, 1931, is applicable to all other Government servants similarly placed? If so, when do Government propose to publish a communiqué to this effect? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The orders have been communicated to all concerned, and a Press communiqué has not been considered necessary. It is still less necessary, now the Honourable Member's question has given publicity to the matter.

ILLICIT IMPORTATION OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION INTO INDIA.

244. ***Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of cases during the past 10 years, that have come to the notice of the Customs and Police authorities at the various Indian ports of illicit importation of arms and ammunition into India *via* the sea-ports;
- (b) whether this importation of arms and ammunition *via* the sea-ports is on the increase since 1921?

The Honourable Sir Harry Haig: (a) and (b). It would be difficult to give full information of the number of cases that have come to the notice of the Customs and Police authorities at the various Indian ports of illicit importation of arms and ammunition into India *via* the sea-ports. Apart from seizures made by the Customs authorities, seizures of arms in illicit possession some of which have been illicitly imported are frequently made by the Police. The problem of smuggling, however, is one to which the Government of India and local maritime Governments are fully alive, and I can assure the Honourable Member that we are in constant consultation both with the home authorities and Local Governments as to the measures to be taken to prevent it.

RULES FOR ADMISSION TO INDIAN VETERINARY CORPS AS COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

245. *Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar: (a) Do Government propose to expedite the publication of the rules enabling Indians of the same qualifications as Britishers, to enter Indian Veterinary Corps as Commissioned officers?

(b) When are such rules likely to be published?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: (a) and (b). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the answer I gave on the 22nd December, 1933, to his starred question No. 1506. I have nothing to add to that answer.

STAFF DECLARED UNFIT DUE TO ILL-HEALTH FOR EMPLOYMENT ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

246. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Is it a fact that the Agent, North Western Railway, issued a circular letter No. 831-E/221, on the 3rd November, 1928, to all Divisional Superintendents to the effect that every endeavour should be made to secure alternative employment to staff whose removal from their appointments is due to ill-health?

(b) Is it a fact that in his letter No. 434-E/60, dated the 22nd February, 1930, the Agent further notified that staff declared medically unfit for employment in their own category but considered fit for employment in other classes will be considered eligible for leave due preparatory to retirement and when on leave, such members of the staff can be recalled if suitable appointments could be found for them?

(c) Is it a fact that a register of all such names of men referred to in parts (a) and (b) is required to be maintained and hopes were held out that preference would be given to such members in recruiting? If so, do the North Western Railway administration maintain any such register?

(d) Is it a fact that rules were framed regulating the discharge of non-gazetted Government servants by Railway Board letter No. 4080, dated the 10th November, 1929? If so, did rule No. 6(ii) provide that when an employee has completed ten years continuous service, every effort should be made to avoid the hardship entailed by his discharge unless frequent specific failures in work have occurred on his part for which he has been given a written warning and he has been punished with stoppage of increment or reduction in pay during two years prior to his discharge?

(e) Is it a fact that one Guard, Bahar Shah of Multan Division, lost one eye, was declared unfit, and was subsequently employed as a luggage guard?

(f) Is it a fact that at a medical examination the vision of the right eye of Sayed Basharatullah, a Guard of the Lahore Division, was declared unfit for A and B class certificates, but fit for C class certificate? If so, is it a fact that such an employee is considered fit for the post of a luggage guard?

(g) Is it a fact that he applied for being employed as a luggage guard? If so, why was he not similarly employed in spite of the fact that several vacancies occurred?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) and (b). Government have no information, but I assume my Honourable friend has seen these circulars and I am quite willing to take his word for their existence.

(c) No such register has been prescribed by the Railway Board.

(d) Yes.

(e) to (g). These are matters within the competence of the Agent to settle and Government consider their intervention unnecessary.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I invite the attention of the Honourable Member that part (c) refers to matters referred to in parts (a) and (b), and (a) refers to the circular of the Agent, N. W. Railway, in which he says that registers are to be maintained. While replying, the Honourable Member has said that the Railway Board has not issued such instructions. Will he please refer to this question and say if the Agent, North Western Railway, has not issued circulars for maintaining these registers?

Mr. P. R. Rau: As I have already said, I have no information about the orders issued by the Agent in this connection.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Will Government inquire from the Agent?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I have already said that I am prepared to trust my Honourable friend in this matter.

Sardar Sant Singh: I can read this portion of the circular for the benefit of the Honourable Member. The circular letter is No. 831-E./221, dated the 3rd November, 1928:

"I shall be glad if you will bring this practice into force with immediate effect, bearing in mind that a register of all such names should be maintained and employment offered to individuals contained therein in preference to outsiders."

Mr. P. R. Rau: It was quite unnecessary for my Honourable friend to read it. I have already said that I have implicit confidence in him in this matter.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know, then, if the reply to part (c) is to be modified in view of this circular, because I want information on the point whether the Agent has ordered the maintenance of such registers or not.

Mr. P. R. Rau: All I said was that no such register has been prescribed by the Railway Board. As regards the Agent's order, the Railway Board must leave it to him to see that those orders are carried out.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know, with reference to part (f), in reply to which the Honourable Member said that the Railway Board does not want to interfere with the discretion of the Agent, whether it is a fact that this gentleman, Sayad Basharatullah, Guard, made four appeals to the Agent which were all rejected in the first instance, and when he addressed an appeal to the Railway Board on the 23rd September, 1929, the Agent granted him four months' leave after rejecting his appeals.

Mr. P. R. Rau: No such appeal has reached the Railway Board.

Sardar Sant Singh: Is it not a fact that, under rule 23 (3) (c), the Agent granted him four months' leave on the 23rd September, 1929?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Next question.

FILLING UP OF VACANCIES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS,
NEW DELHI.

247. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Manager, Government of India Press, New Delhi, has ordered that all vacancies in his Press will be filled by Bengalis from the Calcutta Press? If so, has the approval of the Controller of Printing and the Government of India been obtained to the stoppage of recruitment of candidates from all other provinces?

(b) Is it a fact that all appointments of compositors on the regular establishment have been given to Bengalis and local men have been informed that they will be discharged on the 15th April, 1934, and replaced by Bengalis?

(c) Is it a fact that Bengali compositors have recently been employed on high rates of pay and local men given the minimum pay of their grade only? If so, what are the reasons for this differential treatment?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) No. The second part of the question does not arise.

(b) and (c). Five Bengalee compositors of the Government of India Press, Calcutta, whose services were terminated owing to reduction of establishment in that Press, have been re-employed on the regular establishment of the New Delhi Press. The question of the fixation of their rates of pay is under consideration. Four local men also have been employed on the minimum rates, their term of appointment expiring on the 15th April, 1934. They have not been informed that their places will be filled by Bengalees after that date.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Do Government propose to see that the interests of the men living in the different Provinces will not be overlooked?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I think it has been stated on several occasions in this House that recruitment is not made on provincial considerations.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Certainly this is correct. Do Government appreciate the necessity that all the Provinces should be kept in mind while making these appointments?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: No, Sir.

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda: Will the Honourable Member kindly state whether there are any Marwari compositors?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I have no idea.

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda: Will Government see that the claims of Marwari compositors are considered for receiving training?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: No, Sir.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Is it a fact that Marwaris are not British Indian subjects?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: My Honourable friend is not, I think, quite correct. I imagine that some Marwaris come from Ajmer-Merwara and the position in regard to recruitment from Ajmer-Merwara was explained to my Honourable friend, Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda, in reply to a recent question he asked on this subject.

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda: Marwaris and Ajmer-Merwara men are not identical terms. Ajmer-Merwara is a British province.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): What question is the Honourable Member asking?

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda: My point was whether Government would take steps to train Marwaris as compositors to serve in the Government of India Press, and the Honourable Member replied that, so far as the people from Ajmer-Merwara were concerned, he had given me a reply. I did not ask anything about the people of Ajmer-Merwara. Just as Honourable Members were asking for Sikhs and other communal people, I asked for Marwaris. Marwaris are those who live originally in Rajputana, not in Ajmer-Merwara only and who now live in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, all over India. They are called Marwaris, because of their origin. They belong to British India. I only sought enlightenment from the Honourable Member whether the Government of India consider it also advisable that the community of Marwaris should be allowed to furnish some candidates.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member has given more enlightenment than he has sought.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: May I know from the Government whether their policy is that only men from one or two Provinces should be taken into Government service?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: No, Sir. The Government's policy is to select the best applicants from whatever province they come.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: Do the Government of India place their orders with presses other than the Government of India Press?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: That does not appear to me to arise out of the present question.

Mr. Bhuput Singh: Will the Government of India take Jains in the Government of India Press?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: There is no bar to their doing so.

RECRUITMENT OF A SIKH APPRENTICE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI.

248. ***Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state why no Sikh has so far been recruited as an apprentice to learn the art of printing in the Government of India Presses?

(b) How many apprentices have been trained since the introduction of the apprenticeship scheme in the Government Presses and to which community did they belong?

(c) Is it a fact that an apprentice will shortly be recruited for training in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, for the first time? If so, do Government propose to consider the claims of the Sikh community? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Suitable candidates from the Sikh community were either not available for appointment as apprentices when vacancies occurred, or when available and offered apprenticeships, declined to accept them.

(b) The number of apprentices trained and under training at present is 11 of whom 7 are Hindus and 4 Muslims.

(c) An apprentice has recently been appointed in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, for the first time. The claims of candidates from the Sikh community were considered, but no suitable candidate was available.

RECRUITMENT OF SIKHS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI.

249. ***Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) Are Government aware that out of about 100 compositors in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, only one is a Sikh?

(b) Is it a fact that there is not a single Sikh Lino Mono Operator and Caster in the said Press? If not, why not?

(c) Do Government propose to order the recruitment of more Sikhs in further vacancies so as to give the Sikh community its due share? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Yes.

(b) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, no Sikh applying for the appointment has so far been found to be suitably qualified for it.

(c) The orders of Government relating to the recruitment of minority communities are being followed.

ABSENCE OF WORKING RULES FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD ON THE HARDWAR RAILWAY STATION.

250. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** Will Government please enquire and state whether it is a fact that from the close of the Adh Kumbh Mela at Hardwar, on the 19th April, 1933, till the close of the Outer Cabin (Line

Clear Station) on the 18th May, 1933, there were no working rules at the Hurdwar Railway Station, on the East Indian Railway, Moradabad Division? If so, who is responsible for the infringement of the Railways Act?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Government understand that special working rules duly approved by the Senior Government Inspector were issued to meet the altered condition of the yard during the Adh Kumbh Mela and presumably these rules continued to be in force until normal working was resumed.

ENQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RAILWAY SCHOOL OF
TRANSPORTATION, CHANDAUSI.

251. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Are Government aware, and if not, will they please enquire and state, if it is a fact that out of the eighteen candidates, only three were declared successful at the last course of Assistant Station Masters held at the Railway School of Transportation, Chandausi, East Indian Railway? If so, what are the circumstances under which such a high percentage of failure took place?

(b) Is it a fact that during the period of test examination, the Superintendent (Mr. R. F. Wood) was away from the School, on an excursion? If so, who conducted the examination of the subjects taught by him?

(c) Does the high percentage of failure reflect on the teaching staff? If not, why not?

(d) Do Government propose to have the present administration of the School enquired into by an independent Committee of both officials and non-officials? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a), (b) and (d). Government have no information and do not consider that an enquiry is called for.

(c) A high percentage of failure does not necessarily reflect on the abilities of the teaching staff. A more probable explanation is the abilities of the examinees.

CLOSING OF THE IRON BRIDGE OVER THE RAMGANGA RIVER NEAR
MORADABAD.

252. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Are Government aware, and if not, will they please enquire and state, whether it is a fact that the Iron Bridge over the Ramganga River near Moradabad is closed for all traffic by the order of the Divisional Superintendent, East Indian Railway, Moradabad?

(b) Is it a fact that a contractor has erected a boat bridge over the said river just close to the Railway bridge?

(c) Is it a fact that the contractor charges a tax for the use of the said boat bridge and derives an income due to the closure of the rail bridge?

(d) Is it a fact that the said contractor pays the Station Master at Kathgar a sum of Rs. 150 per mensem as royalty for the period the railway bridge remained closed?

(e) Is it a fact that the said royalty is credited to Railway accounts?

(f) Are Government aware that due to the income from the royalty to the Railway, the general public is much harassed?

(g) Do Government propose to take action to remove the inconvenience caused to the public by such actions of the Station Master and the railway authorities? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Enquiries are being made from the Railway Administration and a reply will be laid on the table in due course.

TRANSFER OF MR. G. ST. LEGER, TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR, DINAPUR, TO MORADABAD.

253. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the circumstances under which Mr. G. St. Leger, Transportation Inspector (Power), Dinapore, is transferred in the same capacity to Moradabad? Is not the said transfer against the reply by Mr. P. R. Rau to starred question No. 997 of the 28th March, 1933, as laid on the table of this House on the 30th August, 1933?

(b) Do Government propose to take action to set right the anomaly? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I am unable to guess how the transfer of an officer from one station to another in the same capacity can be against the reply referred to. If my Honourable friend, will kindly elucidate this point, I shall consider whether any action on the part of Government is necessary

FOG SIGNALS USED ON STATIONS OF THE MORADABAD DIVISION OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

254. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** Will Government please enquire and state:

(i) whether it is a fact that on the 25th December, 1933, "Detonators" or "Fog Signals" were fired at every station of the Moradabad Division, East Indian Railway, to celebrate the ceremony of Lord Christ's birth? If so, were they also fired on the ceremony of the births of His Majesty the King Emperor, of Lord Krishna, of Lord Rama and of Prophet Muhammad? If not, why not?

(ii) what was the financial expenditure incurred by such use of detonators on the 25th December, 1933?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (i) Fog Signals are apt to deteriorate and it is necessary to test the stock occasionally. It is possible that some tests were made on the 25th December, 1933. There is no objection to such tests being made on any other day.

(ii) Government have no information, but it cannot be otherwise than insignificant.

NON-PAYMENT OF SALARIES OF THE DEMOTED STAFF AT THE RAILWAY SCHOOL OF TRANSPORTATION, CHANDAUSI.

255. ***Mr. S. G. Jog:** Are Government aware and if not, will they please enquire and state whether it is a fact that the demoted staff at the Railway School of Transportation, Chandausi, East Indian Railway, were not paid their salaries since September, 1933? If so, what are the reasons for the non-payment, and what action has been taken by Government to ensure the regular payment to the school workers?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Government are enquiring into the matter and I shall lay a reply on the table in due course.

BAGS OF CLOTH FOR BIHAR EARTHQUAKE SUFFERERS AT THE MEERUT CITY RAILWAY STATION.

256. *Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: Is it a fact that the Railway authorities at the Meerut City Station received on the 8th February, 1934, from the Secretary, Kisan Mazdoor Sabha, Meerut, six bags of cloth for sending them at half-rate to Babu Rajendra Prasad, Patna, for relief purposes and that the bags are still lying at the Meerut City Station?

Mr. P. R. Rau: The bags were despatched from Meerut City station on the 16th February, 1934. The delay in despatch was due to the Station Master having to obtain from the Divisional Superintendent, Moradabad, an authority for the concession rate to be allowed. Arrangements have since been made for the concession rates to be allowed without the production of any letter or other authority, for consignments despatched to *bona fide* relief organisations in the earthquake affected area included in lists to be supplied to Railways by the Government of Bihar and Orissa.

TREATMENT OF IMPERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT THE USE OF GLASSES.

257. *Mr. Badri Lal Rastogi: (a) Are Government aware:

- (i) that Dr. W. H. Bates, M.D., of New York, is the discoverer of a cure for imperfect sight by treatment without glasses, and that Dr. R. S. Agrawal, L.S.M.F., an eye-specialist of Bulandshahr (U. P.), is the follower and practitioner of that very system;
- (ii) that Dr. Agrawal has started a charitable hospital at Bulandshahr, the special feature of which is to check the use of glasses and cure patients without them, and that numerous patients from distant places go to that place for treatment and are being cured remarkably by the so-called method?

(b) Are Government also aware:

- (i) that there are several institutions of "Perfect Sight without Glasses" in Germany, England, America and other places, started on Dr. Bates' system while there is none in India started on that system;
- (ii) that the practitioners of this system give a challenge to the effect that children below 12 years of age suffering from myopia or short-sight can be completely cured and their glasses, if used, can also be dispensed with for good without any exception: and
- (iii) that Dr. Agrawal has introduced a simple scheme in some of the schools of Bulandshahr in order to check myopia among students and that this scheme has been a grand success?

(c) If the answers to parts (a) and (b) be in the affirmative, do Government propose (i) to start some clinic or school at Delhi for the cure

and training of the system of imperfect sight without glasses and (ii) to have a copy of the book entitled "The Cure of Imperfect Sight by Treatment without Glasses" in the Library of this House?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: (a) and (b). Government have no information.

(c) Does not arise.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STATION MASTERS AND ASSISTANT STATION MASTERS ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

83. Mr. Goswami M. R. Puri: Will Government kindly state the number of Indian and Anglo-Indian assistants and station masters, separately, on the North Western Railway, drawing Rs. 260 and over?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Information with regard to staff on scales of pay rising to Rs. 250 and over is contained in the Report by the Railway Board on Indian Railways for 1932-33. Government consider that the collection of the information required by the Honourable Member with regard to certain categories of staff alone will involve considerable amount of labour which in their opinion is not likely to be justified by its results.

MUSLIM STAFF IN THE ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT OFFICES IN INDIA.

84. Mr. Muhammad Anwar-ul-Azim: Will Government be pleased:

- (i) to state the percentage of the Muslim staff on the 1st April, 1933, in all the Accounts and Audit Offices under the Auditor General in India, and
- (ii) to lay on the table a statement showing the total number of sanctioned appointments on the 1st April, 1933, in each time-scale of pay in those offices, classifying them into gazetted, non-gazetted, permanent and temporary, and also showing the number of Muslims in each grade?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the statements showing the communal composition of (1) the clerical staff of the civil offices of the Central Government and (2) the All-India and Central Services, which are prepared annually and are in the Library of the House. Government are unable to give more detailed information regarding the communal composition of the Accounts and Audit Offices than is contained in these statements.

COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN CERTAIN GRADES OF THE ENGINEERING BRANCH OF THE PUNJAB AND NORTH-WEST FRONTIER POSTAL CIRCLE.

85. Bhai Parma Nand: What is the comparative strength of different communities among the Line Inspectors, Line-Men and Sub-Inspectors' grade of Engineering Branch of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province Circle?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: The latest figures in possession of Government which are up to the 31st December, 1933, and which relate to the entire cadre of line staff comprising the three grades mentioned by the Honourable Member, are as follows:

Hindus	338
Muhammadans	514
Sikhs	35
Indian Christian	1
Other communities . . . . .	..
Total	888

SUPERVISORY APPOINTMENTS IN THE LAHORE POSTAL DIVISION.

86. **Bhai Parma Nand:** What is the number of supervisory appointments in the Lahore Postal Division and the number of members of each community holding them?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: There are 13 such appointments; of these five are held by Hindus, seven by Muslims and one by a Sikh.

CERTAIN STAFF IN THE DERAJAT POSTAL DIVISION.

87. **Bhai Parma Nand:** What is the number of Departmental Branch Postmasters, Mail Overseers, Postmen and Inferior Servants in the Derajat Postal Division and the number held by each community?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Information on the exact lines asked for by the Honourable Member is not readily available, but a statement containing the information in possession of Government, which, I hope, will meet the Honourable Member's requirements, is annexed.

Communal strength of staff in the Derajat Postal Division on 31st December, 1933.

	Hindus.	Muslims.	Sikhs.	Other communities.	Total.
1. Departmental branch postmasters, overseers, overseer-postmen, head, sorting and reader postmen, postmen and village postmen	12	114	2	..	128
2. Inferior servants . . .	7	75	..	..	82

OVERSEERS AND HEAD POSTMEN IN THE JHELM POSTAL DIVISION.

88. **Bhai Parma Nand:** What is the number of Overseers and Head Postmen of different communities in the whole of the Jhelum Postal Division?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Overseers—6, *viz.*, five Muslims and one Sikh. Head Postman—one only, who is a Muhammadan.

OFFICIALS RETRENCHED IN THE PUNJAB POSTAL CIRCLE.

89. **Bhai Parma Nand:** Will Government please lay on the table a statement showing under each head, the number of officials of each community, brought under retrenchment in the Punjab Postal Circle?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Such information as is available is given in the statement below:

	Hindus.	Muslims.	Sikhs.	Christians.	Other communities.
Superintendents of Post Offices.	1	2	..	..	..
Deputy Assistant Engineer, Telephones.	..	..	..	1	..
Engineering Supervisor .	1	..	..	..	..
Telegraph Masters . .	1	1	..	12	..
Telegraphists . . .	12	..	..	74	..
Clerical staff—					
(i) in Post Office Branch—					
Selection grades .	36	25	6	..	1
Time-scales . .	72	42	7	..	3
(ii) in Railway Mail Service Branch—					
Selection grades .	12	4	1	..	..
Time-scales . .	35	14	3	..	..
(iii) in Telegraph Traffic Branch—					
Selection grades .	3	..	..	..	..
Time-scales . .	5	1	..	..	..
(iv) in Postmaster-General's Office (including Dead Letter Office, Lahore)—					
Selection grades .	8	..	1	..	..
Time-scales . .	5	3	..	..	..

As regards other staff, Government regret that information is not readily available and could not be obtained without an expenditure of time and labour which Government consider would not be justifiable.

DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDED DURING THE GREAT WAR.

90. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** With reference to Government's answer to unstarred question No. 380 of the 14th December, 1933, will Government

be pleased to state whether claims to appropriate higher rates of pension, on account of substantial increase in the disability as a result of the original cause, have not been declared as time-barred, *vide* A. I. I. No 53 of 1932?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: No.

DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDED DURING THE GREAT WAR.

91. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Are Government aware of letter No. R/23/1/352, dated the 26th January, 1934, from the Commandant, Mountain Artillery Training Centre, Ambala, in which he rejects a claim to revision, under Government orders on recommendation No. XXI (II) (g) (iv) and (v) of the War Pensions Committee and the Pension Controller refuses to entertain the claim submitted to him through the Commandant, by sending a copy of the petition direct, *vide* his letter No. G-3/7001, dated the 7th February, 1934?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state who is the proper authority to adjudicate revision of pensionary claims under Recommendation No. XXI of the War Pensions Committee?

(c) What is the procedure, which they recognise in cases, where the Officer Commanding does not forward the claim to the sanctioning authority despite Government orders on Recommendation No. II?

(d) Who is the competent authority to interpret whether a particular claim does, or does not fall under the recommendations of the War Pensions Committee?

(e) Are Government aware that most of the Officers Commanding have assumed the role of interpreter to Pensionary Regulations, and the Government orders on the recommendations of the War Pensions Committee?

(f) Do they propose to take some action in order to expedite the settlement of claims?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: (a) No.

(b) It depends on the nature of the claim. Some can be adjudicated by the local administrative authorities, some by the audit authorities concerned and others again by the Government of India.

(c) If the Commanding Officer does not consider it necessary to forward a claim to higher authority, he informs the claimant accordingly, together with the reasons for his decision. If the claimant is not satisfied, he has the right of petitioning higher authority as indicated in the Government orders on Recommendation No. II.

(d) The local audit and administrative authorities. Doubtful cases are submitted for the orders of the Government of India.

(e) Officers Commanding are expected to be conversant with rules, regulations and Government orders affecting the personnel serving under them; and no reason has been given for supposing that they are interpreting them incorrectly.

(f) Instructions have been issued for the expeditious disposal of all pension claims and Government have no reason to believe that they are not being observed.

REDUCTION IN THE EMOLUMENTS AND IN THE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC INSPECTORS.

92. **Bhagat Chandi Mal Gola:** With reference to the reply to question No. 1556, on the 5th December, 1932, regarding reduction in the emoluments and also in the number of Traffic Inspectors, that the information to that effect had been called for and that it would be laid on the table in due course, will Government please let the House know whether the information can now be supplied?

Mr. P. R. Rau: The information required was laid by me on the table of the House on the 13th February, 1933.

RESERVATION OF POSTS OF ASSISTANT ACCOUNTS OFFICERS, NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY, FOR TRAVELLING INSPECTORS OF ACCOUNTS.

93. **Bhagat Chandi Mal Gola:** With reference to the reply to question No. 1558 on the 5th December, 1932, regarding the reservation of the three posts of Assistant Accounts Officers, North Western Railway, for Travelling Inspectors of Accounts of that Railway, in conformity with the Auditor General's instructions of the 17th January, 1932, to the Chief Auditor, North Western Railway, that the question would be considered in consultation with the Auditor General, will Government kindly let the House know the result of the consultation?

Mr. P. R. Rau: The Honourable Member is referred to parts (d) and (e) of the information placed on the table of the House on the 31st August, 1933, in reply to question No. 15, dated the 1st February, 1933.

RE-INSTATEMENT OF RETRENCHED RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

94. **Bhagat Chandi Mal Gola:** Will Government kindly say if they propose to take any favourable action on Dr. Ziauddin's presidential address on the occasion of the Muslim Conference as published in the *National Call*, dated the 5th February, 1934, regarding the re-instatement of all the retrenched railway employees?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Retrenched railway employees are retained on a waiting list and will be re-employed as vacancies occur.

CLASSIFIED SENIORITY LIST OF STATE RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

95. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Is it a fact that Mr. P. R. Rau, informed this House in reply to starred question No. 998 of the 28th March, 1933, that classified lists of all servants (superior or inferior) are maintained on all State Railways? If so, will Government please state the date on which the said classified lists were notified to the employees of the Moradabad Division, East Indian Railway?

(b) Will Government please obtain a copy of the said classified lists of all servants (superior or inferior, gazetted or non-gazetted) of the East Indian Railway and either lay it on the table or forward the same to me? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) I said that I understood that seniority lists are maintained on all State Railways. It has not been laid down that such lists should be notified to the staff.

(b) No. These lists are meant for departmental use and not for publication.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—*contd.*

Second Stage—contd.

DEMAND No. 1—RAILWAY BOARD—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The House will now resume consideration of Demand No. 1—Railway Board.

Unreasonable Rates.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhanmadan): Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”—
(Unreasonable rates.)

In this connection I will restrict myself and my speech to the unreasonable rates for carrying goods from one station to another. The Railway Rates Advisory Committee, constituted as a result of the Acworth Committee, was empowered among other matters to investigate and make recommendations on the question whether a particular railway rate was reasonable in its effect. But, Sir, reasonableness of rates has never been discussed in the Committee. Sir, the great difficulty in this connection is that India is governed for the benefit of England, and, Sir, the whole policy is directed for the benefit of British interests. The railway lines have been constructed either in the interests of the army or in the interest of giving facilities to British industrialists and capitalists. The policy of the Railway Board is that raw materials should be supplied to England at a cheaper rate and as quickly as possible, while her manufactured articles can be distributed to the interior at the cheapest possible rate so that the British trade may expand in this country. In this connection I want to quote certain examples. Take the case of the carriage of matches from one station to another. The freight from Bombay to Delhi is practically the same as it is from Ahmedabad to Delhi, while the latter is at a distance of 300 miles less. Recently they have changed this policy and have nominally increased the rate from Bombay to Delhi, very nominally.

Then comes the question of freight for foreign sugar. You will find that from Bombay to Cawnpore the rate is slightly over 13 annas a maund while the distance is about 840 miles, but the freight for the Indian sugar from Cawnpore to Akola in the Central Provinces is one rupee 2½ annas, while the distance is 650 miles only.

The same is the case with cotton. When cotton is taken to Bombay, the rate is very cheap and the reason for this is that cotton can thus be supplied to Lancashire at a cheaper rate, but while the same cotton is taken from the Central Provinces and other places to Upper India, the rate is higher. The rate for raw materials for Bombay is very cheap.

At the same time when we consider the difference between the Indian-owned mills and the European-owned mills, the case becomes still worse, and you will see that the rate for cotton to mills in Cawnpore, which is the centre of the European-owned mills, is cheaper than that to Delhi from certain stations, though the distance from Cawnpore in some cases is double that of Delhi. This station to station rate is again very objectionable and gives undue preference.

Sir, these rates are fixed in other countries in accordance with certain principle and ideas. If you will look into the question of other countries, you will find that the case is quite different. Here I want to draw your attention to the cases which were decided in America in which it has been definitely said that in arriving at the determination of what is a reasonable rate, the interests of both the public and of the carrier should be considered. Further, in that case, it has been said that it is not always possible to do full justice to both. What then should be done in that case in which justice is not possible to both? The American Court says that where this is the case, the right of the public must prevail (Hear, hear), but in this country the case is quite contrary. In all these cases here, the interests of Lancashire and other countries prevail. In another case in America, it has been very definitely said that consideration must be given to the fact as to how much a particular commodity can afford to pay. I quote a case from this book, Sir:

"Hence, in determining the reasonableness of railway rates, consideration must be given not only to the carrier, but to individuals requiring the services. The carrier is entitled to adequate recompense for the services performed. The individual is entitled to the rate that he can reasonably afford to pay for the services he requires."

If you consider the rates for agricultural produce, you will find that the rates are particularly very very unreasonable which agriculturists cannot afford to pay. Their minimum rate is, I believe, .01 pie per manud per mile, while, for food-grains, you will find that, on the Assam-Bengal Railway, the rate is .3 per maund per mile, for the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway the rate is .333 pies per maund per mile, the Bengal Nagpur Railway rate goes a bit higher to .38 up to 300 miles and then it goes down to .130 and .1 pies per maund per mile. The Eastern Bengal Railway rate is .3 pie per maund per mile. The Great Indian Peninsula, the North Western Railway and the East Indian Railway rate is about .333 pie per manud per mile.

On page 117 of the Report on Indian Railways, you will find that the working expense of a goods train on the Eastern Bengal Railway is five annas six pies only per ton per mile and on the East Indian Railway and on other State Railways you will find that the rate is two annas to 2.55 annas per ton per mile, and in this way the rates vary between two annas and five annas. But the rates, if you work them out, are very high in connection with the food-grains that are to be taken from one station to another station. Sir, I think Government do not realise that grain trade is also an important trade of this country. I have on several occasions said and several Honourable Members have supported me that India is an agricultural country, and I shall not hesitate to say that Government should devote all their time in order to improve the condition of the agriculturist. But the condition of the agriculturist cannot be improved when the rates for the carrying of grains are so high. I will, therefore, suggest that the cheapest rate should be given for the carrying of agricultural produce from one place to another.

[Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad.]

Sir, the last point that I wish to point out is that for some time past the preparation of the statistics about the rail-borne trade has been discontinued. I will request the Government, through you, Sir, that they should reconsider this point and they must prepare these rail-borne trade statistics as well so that people may know what is the condition of the inter-provincial trade. I will also suggest that, when these rates are changed, they should be placed before the Central Advisory Committee and there must be a uniform rate for all stations, for, at present, it is very difficult to work out the rates from different stations to different stations. The agriculturists are not in a position to decide as to which station they should send their goods, because the calculation of these rates is very very difficult. I would also suggest that my Honourable friend should have the lowest possible rate for agricultural goods especially for rice and paddy; just as they have made special rates for sending wheat to Calcutta and Karachi, in the same way, facilities should be given to Bihar by allowing the special rate for carrying rice from Bihar to other provinces. In this connection I would say that Bihar deserves a great deal of sympathy on account of the earthquake as well, and, if they really want to help that area, they must reduce the rate for agricultural produce.

The rate for carrying the sugar cane is so high that I had a talk with certain mills here, and I came to know that it was very difficult to take sugar cane from those suffered areas to factories near Delhi. I hope that my Honourable friend, Sir Joseph Bhore, will show the same sympathy to my Province, even if it involves some loss, as was shown by my Honourable friend, Sir Frank Noyce, who has said that no money order fees would be charged for sending money to the Relief Committees. In the same way, some reduced rates should be given by the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore for carrying sugar cane from Bihar to the mills in the United Provinces. It may be, say, four annas a maund, the sugar cane producer in Bihar may get at least four annas a maund. With these words, Sir, I move my motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly. Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I most heartily support my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad's motion, and I am glad he had the opportunity of moving it today, although it is the last day of the Railway Budget demands. I am also grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak before my friend Diwan Bahadur Ramaswami Mudaliar gets up, because once he gets up, it is impossible for me to make out any points. So I am glad that I will be able to say whatever I have got to say before my friend, the Diwan Bahadur, supplements it with his wide knowledge and greater researches into the statistics and the trade movements and returns and all that.

Sir, I have got only a few remarks to make, but I am very sour upon the way in which railways discriminate between one commodity and the other commodity and also between rates from one station to another in connection with the agricultural produce. I have a little grievance against my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, that when he appealed to Government to make special rates for rice, he forgot Madras. Sir, Madras is always at a disadvantage except when something or other turns up, and then the Honourable the Home Member says that Madras can take care of herself.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhammadan): Madras took care of us also in this House.

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar: We certainly try to do it, but at the same time I have got to live. All that I want in connection with the disposition of the rates is to enable me to have some food to eat and then I will thank God and will be able to take care of everybody here, so that they may not go wrong including my Honourable friend, Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh. (*A Voice:* "He always goes wrong.") Sometimes he does. There is one little incident that took place some time ago. I do not know if the same thing exists now, because, latterly, I had no opportunity to take interest in this. That is the most favourable rate that the railways quote for the raw products and the most disadvantageous rate when they can find a wagon for the finished material. I will give you an instance. The Hyderabad Dominion is, I think, the second largest tract of country, in India which produces castor seed. Years ago, there was an American concern, and a representative of it came out here and wanted to manufacture oil and the by-products from the castor seed. They wanted to lay their pipe line from the nearest station to the Marmagoa port and then bring their own steamers and load the oil in those steamers and take it to America. The reason why such a proposal came into existence was this. If I exported raw material, then the representatives of Volkart Brothers or of Rally Brothers will outdo me, because they have the greatest facilities in the shape of wagons from the place of production right up to the port. Now, if I have got oil and if I had made a forward contract with a foreign country, the greatest difficulty for me is to transport that oil from my place right up to the port and to get it in time to fulfil my contract with the foreign merchant or importer. Time after time we were faced with this difficulty. At last we found relief by getting this American company to start on a huge scale the manufacture of oil and conveying it right up to Marmagoa. We had to cover a long distance, because we are living in the interior and our friends, the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Company on the one side and the Great Indian Peninsula from Wadi to Raichur on the other, are so very solicitous of our welfare that it was impossible to give effect to this scheme on whatever calculations you may arrive at it, and the result was that the whole scheme failed. If this statement of mine is challenged, I can adduce proofs to the effect that materials which could be utilised as raw materials in other countries, were not so treated. Of course I have nothing to say against those people who try and get their things as cheap as possible. In the matter of business, it is no good sitting down and crying; you must be up and doing. But my complaint is about my own railways, which, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, said the other day, belong to us, in consequence of the 850 crores of capital that we have sunk in them. I say, therefore, that the railways should not make a discrimination in that matter. I will tell you another incident. When we opened up what is now known as the metre gauge in the Nizam Railways, at that time it was known as the Hyderabad-Godavari Valley Railway, naturally we transported our agricultural and industrial products from Hyderabad and from the other end of our metre gauge right up to Manmad and from there tranship them on to Bombay. Before that, all our goods went as far as Wadi and from there we had to take them to Bombay. Everybody knows that the distance between Manmad and Bombay is less than the distance between Wadi and Bombay. The G. I. P. Railway authorities found out that we were diverting our trade to Manmad, and so they promptly raised the freight and made the freight

[Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar.]

between Manmad and Bombay equal to the freight between Wadi and Bombay. That may be a business-like way of doing things, and the result was that the Hyderabad agriculturist was faced with this position. We were situated in an inland place and so we had to pay more and more money. Between the Railway Company and the Government which come in for its demand, what is there? My Honourable friend says, improve the conditions of the agriculturists. But there is nothing left upon which the agriculturist could improve himself. If there is any excess of production, as I believe it is the idea of the Railway Department, then they ought to give us facilities for exporting the excess products.

The other day I was told that we in Madras produce 1,250,000 tons of rice more than our actual requirements and we get 400,000 tons from Burma as imports, so that we have got 1,650,000 tons to get rid of. I believe the condition now is that Bengal produces much less than what it requires for her own consumption. Now, Sir, it is up to Government to give us facilities to get rid of the extra produce, so that it may go to Bengal and find some market. It is no good saying that I am asking for more than what the Madras rice fetches in my own place. But when I do find some market for my rice, and I have got to tranship my surplus production to Bengal, then, I submit, we ought to be given some facilities to do that as cheap as possible.

I would like to bring one other matter to the notice of the Honourable Member in charge. Burma exports rice to India. I do not object to that, because Burma at present forms part of India, and so long as she chooses to be with India, I cannot object to Burma sending her rice over to India. But what I am concerned with is that the rates that prevail for transporting by sea Burma rice up to Madras is infinitely less than the rate, for instance, that obtains between Madras and the Southern Districts, say, up to a distance of 200 miles. What, therefore, happens is that, instead of unloading in Madras, they take it to one of these coastal ports by choice, Negapatnam, and then from there they take to the Southern Districts. Being coarser rice, it can be sold much cheaper than the rice that we produce, and the result is, even the little money that we can make out of our produce are lost to us on account of this. The rate for sea-going traffic from Burma to Madras is cheaper, and, therefore, some means must be devised by which the railway freights could be made as cheap as the steamer freights. I do not know how the Government will do it. It is not my business to find out ways and means. My business is merely to cry for a remedy. The Government say that they take care of me and they take as much as 85 per cent in the shape of land revenue from me in order to maintain the Government. Therefore, it is the business of the Government to find out a remedy to cheapen the railway freights. It is not for me to suggest the remedy. If I am in the place of Government, then probably I would have suggested some remedy, but at present I have no materials before me, and, therefore, I do not know how these freights are worked out. My business is only to tell the Government how I am situated economically, and it is left to the Government to relieve my distress.

Last year or the year before, the Ceylon market was practically closed to us, and what little export there could be from the Southern districts was prevented by the attitude of the S. I. Railway. Yesterday, my Honourable friend, Mr. Uppi Sahab, said a lot of things about his part of

the country. The S. I. Railway were good enough to resist us for a long time, and, after a good deal of trouble, they lowered the rate just to such an extent that it was impossible to accept, for the price has gone down. Perfectly true, they lowered the rate and probably their income was reduced on that account. I cannot say definitely, because, if the rates are lowered, there is a greater quantity that is exported and probably the income would be adjusted in this manner. I wanted to study the statistics, but they were so confused that I had to wade through a tremendous lot of figures which, if it does not absolutely confound you, it is absolutely of no use to you for all practical purposes. I submit that India is chiefly an agricultural country and it contains 90 per cent of agricultural population, and the prosperity of India will never come except if the agricultural population is protected. How are you going to do it? If there is a little surplus, we are not able to export it to another place. The rise in the price for which we have been asking for a long time has not come about, and, the more I think of it, the more I am led to think that it depends upon the devaluation of the rupee. But I am not going to trouble the House about that now, because it would be irrelevant to the point under discussion. Barring that, I would respectfully submit that Government would kindly make a list of the agricultural products and trace them from the point of production up to the point where the things are mostly in demand, rice, wheat, millet, cotton and other products, and find out how, with the least burden, we can transport our articles from one place to another. After all, I do not want to touch the pocket of the railway, because it is touching my own pocket, or it would be touching from one pocket to another. I know that my Honourable friends in the Punjab have got a powerful set of lungs and so they have been able to cry and get a cheap freight for the Punjab wheat. It is the Punjab wheat that has been able to weigh the scale in favour of the Muhammadans getting two seats in the Statutory Board. (Laughter.) Unfortunately, we in Madras do not eat wheat, and probably on that account our lungs are not particularly strong, but our stomach is all the same very insistent and we are always getting hungry, and who is there to listen to our plaintive cries? Nobody, but this is the only time when I can ventilate my grievances. But some of my Honourable friends say what is the good of discussing all these things in the Budget? But there is a Urdu proverb which says:

"Zabar dast mara rone nahin diya."

"The tyrant beats you, but does not allow you to cry."

This is my position, but my Honourable friend, the Diwan Bahadur, objects to my raising all those grievances now. But I say, this is the only time when I can put forward, in spite of the time restriction, my grievances. But my friend says, do not cry.

In conclusion, in supporting this motion, I hope that the agricultural products will have the first, will have the fairest, will have the best and will have the only chance in prescribing favourable rates and freights in order to move our products from one place to another.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-official): May I ask your direction on one point, Sir? I find the practice is growing in this House that the Government do not take part in the middle of the discussion, with the result that the discussion goes on in a one-sided manner, and I feel, Mr. President, and I would like you to state your view whether it will

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

not be convenient for the Government to take part in the middle of the discussion and then reply after the other speakers have spoken if the Government should find the reply is necessary.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): The discussion will also be shortened.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Yes, Sir, if the Government should take part in the middle of the discussion, it will also save the time of the House.

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar: I had brought the same point to your notice on several occasions, and I do feel that you will kindly think over the matter and give us some relief.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): It is very difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule as to when exactly the Government Member ought to intervene. If, in the course of the discussion, it appears to the Government Member that his intervention at an early stage will cut short the discussion and will throw light on matters about which Honourable Members on the Opposition side are groping in the dark, then, the Chair would strongly advise the Honourable Member of Government to intervene at an early stage. But if the Honourable Member for Government finds that there is nothing that he could contribute to shorten the discussion and that he would simply like to listen to the criticism of the various speakers and then reply to the debate, then it would be left to him to intervene at the last stage. It would all depend on the nature of the debate. The Honourable Member for Government must be the best judge and decide at what stage of the debate his intervention would be useful.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: I dare say the Government Member would be willing to stand up and give the reply, but it is we who are prolonging the discussion.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, in previous years when this Budget discussion was going on, Mr. Hayman used to stand up in the middle and clear up the points.

Sir Abdur Rahim (Calcutta and Suburbs: Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I believe that besides the Honourable Member in charge of the subject, there are also other Official Members who can throw light on the subject under discussion, and, I think, if light is thrown on certain matters when questions are raised in the course of the discussion, it not only shortens the debate, but makes our task on this side of the House much easier.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, I do not quite follow the points that have been raised by Honourable Members. I think the whole object, as I said the other day, of moving a cut motion was to ventilate grievances on the floor of this House. Now, Sir, it is impossible for me to get up before I know what those grievances are. Honourable Members of the House are entitled to a full reply in regard to such grievances as they wish to ventilate. It

has, therefore, I think, been the practice to wait until Honourable Members have made a full statement of their criticisms and then to give them as complete a reply as it is possible to give. If Honourable Members, as suggested by my friend, Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh, prefer merely to raise a general point, I am certainly prepared to answer such general point at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The intervention of the Honourable Member for Government at an early stage in certain cases to explain what Government have done may probably enable Honourable Members on the other side to realise that some of the grievances are imaginary, and they would not give vent to them.

Mr. S. C. Mitra (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): But there is one difficulty. After the Government Member replies, subsequent speakers will perhaps raise new points, and so it should be made possible for more than one Government Member to speak.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sometimes our grievance may be based on incorrect or insufficient information, and if the Government Member helps us, it will very much shorten the discussion.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, my point was not only as regards the shortening of the time. My point was that in moving either a reduction or a Resolution or any other motion, we criticise Government's policy and we ask Government to lay down their policy. If Government will not state what their policy is, we shall go on making one-sided speeches. If Government intervene in the middle and state what their policy is, we shall be able to reply, otherwise not. Otherwise Government sit on like an oracle and have the last word.

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter (Leader of the House): Sir, Mr. Joshi says Government should state their policy. No doubt Honourable Members opposite have a right to know what the Government policy is. But criticism is made not merely on policy, but on day to day administration. With regard to grievances arising out of day to day administration, Honourable Members form their views from their own experience and they bring facts to light. It is, thus, not merely a question of policy only, but policy *plus* administration. When these are inextricably mixed up, how can you expect the Government Member to get up in the midst of the debate? As Mr. Mitra pointed out, after the Government Member has spoken, other criticisms are made, criticisms both on policy and on administration.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: He has a right of reply.

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter: I am not suggesting that Honourable Members may not bring forward new facts and new suggestions, and so on. But that will not shorten the debate by any means; that will only necessitate more than one speech from the Government side. If that is the intention of the House that, whenever a criticism is made, the Government Member should get up and answer that criticism, and when a second criticism is made, he should get up again and answer that criticism

[Sir Brojendra Mitter.]

that will not facilitate matters. Much the best course is for the Government Member to see whether criticism was being made upon insufficient material or erroneous assumptions, and so on. In such a case, the intervention of the Government Member at an early stage would undoubtedly facilitate the debate and shorten it. But you cannot lay down a hard and fast rule.

Sir Abdur Rahim: I think Government ought not to be satisfied with the last word. They have the last word, but we want that, in the midst of the debate, some light should be thrown by Government. Some official on behalf of Government ought to state what the position is with regard to the discussion which is going on. In that case we will be able to review our own position and perhaps it might shorten the discussion. At any rate, we would arrive at a much more satisfactory conclusion than if Government take up the position that they will have the last word and will not say anything more.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Chair does not think there should be a discussion on this point. There is a great deal of force in what Sir Abdur Rahim says, because, after all, a debate should not simply be one-sided, but there ought to be opportunities for both sides to answer criticisms levelled by each side. To bring about that result, it would probably be advisable that in as many cases as possible somebody representing Government should intervene early in the debate, so that the Opposition might know what exactly the point of view of Government is and then give their reply. In any case, the Member for Government has the last word and he has got a right of reply again.

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I heartily support the motion moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, Secretary of the Rural Group, and so ably supported by the President of the Group, the Raja Bahadur. Eighty per cent. of the people of India earn their living directly from agriculture, and almost the whole of the rest indirectly from it. For some years past, the prices of agricultural products have gone down enormously. And to add to it, the Railway Board has handled the question of freight rate on agricultural products so unreasonably, uneconomically and so unsympathetically that food grains have not been able to move on our railways as they should. The result has been that surplus production of certain articles in some Provinces have not been able to remove the shortage in other Provinces. Foreign supplies conveyed to India at cheaper rates through steamers have captured those markets. While claiming to be commercial organisations, our railways have failed to appreciate the fundamental principle of commerce which is development and constant pressure towards seeking and taking advantage of every outlet. Sir, all goods are divided up into ten classifications to each of which a maximum rate per maund per mile is attached and also a minimum rate per maund per mile, within which the rates vary; and this classification may be modified by the application of schedules to goods, or, again, modification may take place by what are known as special station to station rates which are subject in turn to further sub-division. Over and above this, there are favoured goods and specially favoured goods as regards rates. So freight rate on goods in India has no principle and no reason. The same article has one rate for inland trade and another and lower rate, if meant for export.

Grains and pulses are placed in class I. I will deal briefly with rice and wheat only. Rice is the most important agricultural produce in India. The price of rice has gone down to one-fourth of its 1927-28 price and is now selling in my parts at ten annas a maund. This is much less than the cost price. The freight rate on rice from Rangoon to Madras is 4a. 8p. per maund, while from stations in Godavari and Kistna deltas to Madras it is 7 annas per maund; and from Tanjore and Coimbatore districts it is from 5a. 1p. to 6a. 2p. per maund. From Rangoon to Calicut, the freight is 5a. 5p. per maund, while from Kistna and Godavari to Calcutta it is, 8a. 4p. per maund. It is no wonder that Burma, Siam and Indo-China rice is dumped into the Indian market. There is also an export duty on rice of 2a. 3p. per maund even under these circumstances. I do not know the rate on rice in the Bengal Nagpur Railway which is the only railway in our parts. But, I am sure, it is prohibitive. I will quote one sentence from a Government report:

"Enquiries made from the Bengal Nagpur and M. S. M. Railways show that since the beginning of 1933 reductions in railway freights have been made and have had the effect of stimulating internal rice traffic from the producing areas both in Orissa and Madras."

I now come to wheat. For reasons unknown, probably for stimulating export in Karachi port, wheat from the Punjab is carried at a slightly reduced rate; so wheat is generally carried to Calcutta by steamer from Karachi, and this process, after paying wharfage charges at two ports, is much cheaper (three annas per maund) than the all-rail route to Calcutta. There cannot be a better illustration of the Railway Board's failure to rise equal to the occasion in times of emergency. The coal trade in India enjoys a most-favoured commodity treatment, probably because members of the ruling race are intimately connected with it. The freight rate on rice and wheat is .38 of a pie per maund per mile maximum and .100 of a pie per maund per mile minimum; but, due to the schedules and other conditions, the general rate is never much below the maximum, while coal enjoys a special tariff of its own quite outside the limits of both the classification and schedule rates. The general freight rate for coal is .05 of a pie per maund per mile. Besides this low rate of freight, coal enjoys, since 1887, many other advantages and facilities for transport. What is the relative importance of coal and food-grains? In 1927-28, the contribution from land revenue alone, paid throughout British India, was 35.41 crores of rupees. What did coal contribute during the same year? It cannot have been an important amount, as in the report submitted to Parliament a head is not assigned for it. In the same year, the value of exports of rice, wheat and barley alone amounted to 39.25 crores of rupees while the total value of coal produced during the same period was 9.02 crores of rupees only. Again, in the same period, the percentage of the population occupied in the production of raw materials was 73.15, while that employed in the exploitation of minerals was .17 only. Have not, therefore, the agricultural producers the same claim at least if not more on the sympathies of the Railway Board? Men travelling in the third class are generally concerned with the agricultural produces, while men concerned with coal trade generally travel in the first class; and the treatment of the Railway Board towards each of them is in the same proportion. I may assure my much-esteemed friend, Mr. Sen, that I do not mean that he should not enjoy the advantages given to coal: but that I should also enjoy the same advantages along with him. Raise the freight rate on coal to that of what it is on rice and wheat, and in six months coal would be lying in stacks at the pit mouths as nobody would buy it who

[Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra.]

could possibly do without it, just as is happening to rice and wheat today. Trade is not flowing and the produce is lying about in stagnant unconnected pools, as would happen to coal under similar circumstances. But if agricultural produce is placed in the same rate as coal, I believe inland trade and even export would be stimulated to a considerable extent without bringing any loss to the Railway Administration, and at the same time greatly relieving the present distress. Agricultural produce is the best in the matter of railway transport as they pack well, the packages are uniform in size and weight; there is no danger from leakage or deterioration in transit and wagons can be loaded to their fullest capacity.

I will now deal with the question of surcharge. In 1917, the Government of India levied a surcharge on all goods traffic as a war measure only, and food grains were charged at the rate of two pies per maund and the amount collected was credited to Government direct. In 1921, a proposal was made to increase this surcharge, and so a special primage charge of $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas per rupee was levied. But, subsequently, in 1922, a new classification of rates was introduced, and rates existing before the war were increased by 15 to 25 per cent. which is now appropriated into the railway revenues and no account of what this increase yields is being kept nowadays. Is not this surcharge an indirect tax on agriculturists? By this means the agricultural producers have to pay another tax over and above the land tax. In agricultural produce, it is the producer who bears the burden and not the buyer as in other commodities, because there is great competition, both internal and foreign, and, secondly, agriculturists are not at all organised.

There is another point. By means of the railways, cannot the Federal Government at any time strangle an autonomous Province that produces surplus agricultural produce, by imposing special charges on those articles if they so like? I will ask my Muhammadan friends, who are so keen over provincial autonomy, to remember this.

I will now raise the question of the difficulties of my own unfortunate Province. I represent a constituency here which is a purely consuming one: as it has all along been tied to the tail end of some Province or other, no attention has ever been paid to our industries. The Province is composed mainly of coastal districts, and hence fish is found in abundance there. In fact, fish in large quantities is carried to the markets of Kharagpur, Jomshedpur and particularly Calcutta from all parts of Orissa, particularly from the Chilka Lake; but fresh fish is placed in class 6 of the classification of goods, thereby raising the freight to two and a half times that of class 1. Even then the Railway Authorities do not provide for any amenities for the quick transport of fish.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member must conclude now.

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra: There are no refrigerated godowns near the Chilka Lake, nor are there refrigerated carriages in goods trains. There are also no refrigerated godowns at Calcutta on the B. N. R. The result is that except the Chilka side, for other places, ice is brought to the localities for packing fish. A large quantity of fish is spoiled during transit. Fish trade cannot grow up due to high freight, and as no special facilities to the trade are provided to the trade by the B. N. R. While fresh meat is sold in Calcutta from America, fresh fish cannot be carried to Calcutta from a distance of 200 miles.

Cocoanut is another of our important trade. But most of our produce has got to be transported for want of a local market. The freight rate for cocoanut is .42 as it is placed in class II. The local producers are finding it very hard to compete with others due to this high freight rate, and the result is that this industry is dwindling.

Utensils in black and soft white stones are manufactured in Orissa, but as the B. N. R. Company charges a very high freight rate on them and yet no care is taken during their transit, this industry is also dying out for want of a market.

Orissa's forest-produces are very large. The B. N. Railway gives no special rate for the transport of forest produce. I could cite many such instances to show how the Railway Administration in India is not run either on commercial lines or for the good of the country.

Sir, I will here very briefly state the inequitable third class .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) The Honourable Member must resume his seat.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, Honourable Members opposite, I think, desire to know the general principles upon which we proceed in the matter of fixing our rates for agricultural and industrial produce. On this matter, Sir, I endeavoured to give to the House as much light as I possibly could at an earlier stage. I endeavoured to make it clear that, in view of the fact that we were required to work on a commercial basis, it was really not possible for us to quote any rates which were not strictly economic rates, and I endeavoured to enunciate what, I thought, was a really important principle, namely, that assistance, if it was to be given to agriculture and to industries, should not be concealed, should not be indirect, it should not be at the expense of the railways, but that it should be definite, direct and open, so that from time to time the Legislatures and the Governments concerned could know exactly what assistance was being given to what particular industry, and could vary the principles on which they were acting and also the measure of assistance given. I may point out that, in a particular case, not so very long ago, the Government of the Punjab actually did proceed on those principles. They agreed to reimburse to the Railway Department any loss, speaking generally, that might accrue from the carriage of Punjab wheat to certain destinations at certain concessional rates. That, I submit, Sir, is the correct principle upon which to proceed. Nevertheless, I would submit to this House that, wherever it was possible for us to feel that a reduction of rates would stimulate and attract traffic, we have never been backward to introduce such rates. I hope I will be able to satisfy the House that in this matter we have paid very special attention to the case of agricultural products. Now, I shall refer to actual points which have been made by Honourable Members.

My friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, referred to the case of sugar. He pointed out that whereas the rate for sugar from Bombay to the United Provinces was, I think he said, Rs. 0-13-0 per maund, the rate for sugar from Cawnpore to the Central Provinces was something like Rs. two a maund. Sir, I have not been able to find any justification whatsoever for the latter statement. On the contrary, the railways have gone, as far as they possibly could, to reduce rates in order to stimulate traffic from the sugar producing centres to other parts of India, in fact I am not sure that

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we shall not lay ourselves open to criticism from areas other than the northern areas producing sugar for the rates which we have recently introduced. May I give to the House specific instances? In January, 1933, the East Indian Railway Administration quoted special rates for sugar from important centres in the United Provinces to Howrah. These rates meant a reduction of between 25 per cent. to 41 per cent. in the rates previously applicable. The G. I. P. Railway quoted special rates for sugar to Bombay from factories situated on the Bengal and North Western Railway, the East Indian Railway, and the Eastern Bengal Railway, and the reductions amount to something between 9 per cent. and 36 per cent. With a view to developing the long distance traffic from Bengal and North Western Railway stations, the East Indian Railway, in conjunction with the Bengal Nagpur Railway and the M. S. M. Railways, introduced in 1933 a special rate of Rs. 1-4-0 per maund *via* Mokama Ghat to Madras, and the reduction represents a decrease of something like 55 per cent. in the rates previously imposed. I do not think, Sir, that we can be charged with not having paid attention to agricultural interests.

I think my friend also referred to the carriage of cane. There, again, I can assure him that something has been done. In view of the special circumstances of Bihar, brought about by the recent disaster, both the East Indian Railway and the Bengal and North Western Railway have agreed to carry at considerably reduced rates cane to the various factories serving the agricultural areas in Bihar producing cane. (Applause.)

My friend, Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar, yesterday made the suggestion that if it was possible for us to carry coal at the rates at which we were carrying it, it ought also to be possible for us to carry agricultural produce at the same rate. Obviously, Sir, the argument is untenable. May I point out that the value of a ton of coal is something like Rs. 3, and the value of a ton of wheat is something like Rs. 50. Surely, it would be impossible for us to impose on coal the same rate that we charge for wheat, and if we reduced the rates for the carriage of wheat to those charged for coal, well, Sir, we are bound for disaster. I would point out one thing to Honourable Members, and that is this, we have constantly to place in the balance the claims of commodities to low rates on the one hand, and the claims of third class passenger traffic on the other to low fares. It is possible in a country like the United State of America to put down the rates for the carriage of commodities, because they are able to charge comparatively high rates for passenger traffic. We, on the other hand, cannot possibly raise our rates for third class passenger traffic beyond a certain limit. I hope Honourable Members will bear this limiting factor always in mind, namely, that we cannot both put down the rates for commodities and at the same time keep low—and we always wish to do so—the rates for third class passengers, without our railways working at a loss. Ultimately, the loss falls on the tax-payer and the country is no better off. I would point out, with special reference to what my friend, the Raja Bahadur, said that even in the case of rice we do what we possibly can. He pointed out that the carriage of rice from Rangoon to Madras costs less than the carriage of rice from Madras to certain stations, I think, up to a limit of 200 miles. Well, it is a well-known fact that freight rates by sea are in all cases infinitely lower than it is possible for railways to charge. I cannot follow him into the exact details of the particular case that he quoted, but I shall be happy to go into the matter further with him if he desires to do so. At the same time, I would point out that,

seeing the conditions of the agriculturist in the Madras Presidency, we have within recent months reduced the rates for the carriage of rice. The rates from stations in the Tanjore district to Colombo were reduced in April last by approximately 16 per cent. and for local bookings on the South Indian Railway for distances of 166 to 400 miles from the 20th June, 1933, by from seven per cent. to 24 per cent. I can quote other similar reductions, but I hope the House will take it from me that we have not folded our hands and said, "it is impossible for us to do anything, because any lower rates would be uneconomical". I do not know that I can at this stage usefully say anything very much more.

There is one point my Honourable friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, raised and that was in regard to rail-borne statistics. May, I say, I am in entire agreement with him on that matter? I consider it was a very great mistake indeed for Government to have stopped the collection of those statistics (Hear, hear), and I may say that we shall shortly be in a position to supply information on matters pertaining to rail-borne statistics. (Applause.) Then my Honourable friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, made what I may characterise as a thoroughly unfounded charge when he said that the rates for cotton to the ports were low, deliberately low, in order to help Lancashire. I am sure, no one in this House would support a suggestion like that.

That, Sir, covers most of the points that have been made so far. I think what I have said will enable Honourable Members to realise that in the matter of agricultural rates we have very definitely, as far as we possibly could, put down our rates, but that we cannot put them down to a point at which we shall be faced with loss on the working of our railways.

Maulvi Muhammad Shafee Daoodi (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): May I know what is the reduced rate for sugarcane at present?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: I cannot tell my Honourable friend the reduced rates in force, but I shall be happy to get them from the Administrations and to communicate them to my Honourable friend. The whole idea was that in view of the fact that certain factories had been damaged in the Bihar area by the earthquake, the ryot should not suffer by reason of that fact. The idea underlying this reduction was that sugarcane might be more easily carried to the nearest working factory to enable the ryot to sell his cane.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Madras City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, I am thankful that the Honourable Member for Commerce and Railways intervened at this early stage of the debate and has cleared up some of the points, and, if I still venture to support the motion, it is because I feel that other aspects of the question have not yet been considered by the Government, and some of those aspects I should like to place before this House.

Sir, I hold in my hand a copy of the proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Council of 1912, and if you read the speech of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey, who then introduced a Resolution concerning this very question of reasonable rates for goods traffic, you will find how close an approximation there is between the arguments and the statements that were then made and the arguments and statements that have been made in the course of the debate today. Turning to one aspect of the question,

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the speech of my Honourable friend, Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar, when he suggested that the G.I.P. Railway specifically enhanced the rates from Manmad to Bombay, so as to cut out the competition of the Hyderabad State Railway, I may recall to this House the observations of the late Sir Vithaldas Thackersey:

"Inter-provincial trade also suffers owing to the so-called block rates quoted by practically all railways in order to draw all available traffic to their own line and to prevent as far as possible traffic from their own stations to go on other Companies' lines. This again from the Railway Company's point of view is perfectly justifiable, as no Company can be expected to tolerate the transfer of its own traffic to other lines if it can possibly prevent it. But from the country's point of view, it is clearly not advantageous that merchants should be compelled to send their goods not by the route which gives them readiest access to the best market—whether it be Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi or Madras—but by a route which brings the most profit to the Railway which happens to pass through the particular places. And again, why should the people of such places be hard hit because their geographical position may happen to be between two competing lines? These hardships are unavoidable in countries where railways are owned by private Companies, but why should they be tolerated in India where the railways belong to the State? I think a scheme ought to be devised under which the interests of the people may not suffer in the competition between rival Companies."

That brings me to the question which I want to put to the Honourable the Commerce Member. The Honourable Member in his observations spoke as if there was no differentiation whatsoever with reference to the fixation of these rates—actual rates, not maxima and minima whether the railways are State-owned or State-managed or are Company-managed. I should like to know if this is an accurate state of affairs. What control have the Government got over the fixation of the actual rates for station to station or long-distance or short-distance traffic with reference to Company railways? I remember, when the Acworth Committee was sitting, the Government made out a case that under various contracts, they had entered into with these Companies, they had no power to fix the actual rates and that their power was exhausted by fixing the maxima and the minima rates. They relied on the following clause which appears in many of the contracts of these Company-managed railways:

"The Secretary of State shall, from time to time, authorise the maximum and the minimum rates within which the Company shall be entitled to charge the public for services rendered by way of, or in connection with, the conveyance of passengers and goods or undertakings and shall prescribe the several classes and descriptions of passengers and goods to which such rates shall be respectively applicable."

The Acworth Committee drew attention, however, to the fact that in the contracts made with these private Companies, there was a further clause in which reference had not been made by the Government which submitted its memorandum on the subject to that Committee. The words were:

"As well as the extent to which within the maximum and minimum so authorised the company may vary the said rates in respect of distances from where or the special conditions under which such conveyance takes place or services are rendered."

It is my recollection that the Acworth Committee said that while the Government were of opinion on the basis of the advice taken from their local officers, that actual rates could be prescribed to the Company-managed railways, the Acworth Committee had taken similar opinion from English lawyers on the subject and they said that the Government had the right to do so. I want to know what is the position with reference to this. If my recollection serves me aright also, they said that, in any case, legislation could be made for the purpose and that, by legislation,

Government may direct the fixation of the actual rates, or what may be termed as standard rates, and not merely content themselves with maxima and minima rates in Company-managed railways. We know that this is a very important subject, and I want to know from the Honourable the Commerce Member whether there is any distinction in practice between the complete authority which, I admit, he has over State-owned and State-managed railways where the entire basis of traffic rates is in the hands of the Commerce Member and the Railway Board, and the Company-managed railways like those which exist in South India, for instance, the M and S.M. Railway or the S.I.Ry., over this question of the fixation of the actual traffic rates. We are aware that the fixation of maxima and minima rates is of no avail whatsoever. My Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin, said in the course of the London Committee proceedings that the maxima and minima are fixed with such wide divergence between them that a coach and four can easily go through them, that they are of no benefit whatsoever, that they do not approximate anywhere to the actual rates, whether you take either the one extreme or the other, and he went on to make the suggestion in the course of the proceedings that these maxima and minima should be very much narrower to each other, so that the margin of discretion and the latitude which should be given to the Railway Board may be, as small as possible. But the suggestion of the Acworth Committee was not merely that. It said that it should take power for fixing the standard rates, the actual rates in some cases at any rate, and that by legislation or by some other means this may be undertaken. They argued on the basis of the English Statute of 1894 which was amended by the Statute of 1921 which gives this actual power so far as the English Company-owned private railways are concerned. The Government have got the power, for remember that these are public utility concerns and are run under specific limitations and restrictions. They cannot claim to have that latitude and that discretion which a private trading firm has got. They have got certain responsibilities, they have got certain rights Statutorily given to them, and, therefore, it is unreasonable to expect that they should not come in within the restrictions that, in the interests of the public, the Government of the day would like to impose. In America also, as those who have studied the question know, under the Act of 1920, I think, an Inter-State Commerce Commission has been appointed and that Commerce Commission has got the right to fix these rates. In the United States, among the enactments, there is one that coincides with a similar enactment in the French Intermediate Stations Clause, by which the railway company is forbidden to charge more for a short journey than for a long one if the first is included in the second and the transportation is effected under similar circumstances.

Let me come to one chief grievance with regard to the traffic rate. Several instances were quoted by Sir Vithaldas Thackersey, and instances were also quoted by many of my Honourable friends. The real gravamen of the grievance is this. If for a long distance you charge a particular rate, it sometimes happens that for a shorter distance in the same line you charge a higher rate. The reason for this is supposed to be that the railway, by some mystical process, calculates the cost and fixes these rates. The economics of transportation according to the railway system is a very peculiar economics. They work out on several bases. If goods is to be carried from one station to another, they take into consideration, first of all, the cost of maintaining the permanent way, stations, and

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station staff which is a fixed factor, supervision and general charges which is also a constant factor, the cost of repairs to rolling stock, which is the same whether it is long distance or short distance traffic, running expenses are a fixed figure for an hour or for a day, and the principle on which the whole thing is worked out is that the more a wagon earns per day the better it is for the railway company. You may take an example. Suppose rice is sent from Madras to Calicut, or, better still, some produce is sent from Delhi to Calicut. The journey takes about seven to ten days. The mileage is there, about 1,500 miles, let us take it: What they do is this. They calculate the rate per mile, arrive at the figure and then see how many days the wagon takes to go to Calicut, the days which are taken in unloading the goods, the days which are taken to return, and possibly the days taken in empty haulage of that truck. It is obvious if the same principle is adopted with reference to the haulage of goods, say, over 50 miles, the time taken in unloading and loading, two days, makes all the difference and gives enormous weightage to the costing account, so that the haulage for the shorter distance *pro-rata* becomes very much more than the haulage for the longer distance. That, I understand, is the reason why the anomaly exists in many of these cases, that the haulage for very much longer distances is really less than the haulage for smaller distances. In all these matters, there is one thing to be taken into consideration, the capacity to bear the rate by the trader. It must at least be as important a consideration as the fact whether the railway is able to earn or not, and may I also point out a fallacy in all these calculations, which generally applies to all these so-called Government commercial concerns. We had the same difficulty, for instance, when we examined the question of costing accounts with reference to the army factories which manufacture various lethal weapons and other things. For every order that you take, you add at the top of the costing account of that order overhead charges as you call it, little remembering that overhead charges is constant whether the additional order goes into the factory or not. Take the question of these commodities. I said, one consideration at least, that should be borne in mind, is the capacity of the trader to bear the rate. You add to the charge that must be levied on the goods traffic the cost of keeping the permanent way, and the permanent way establishment which is there, whether 10,000 more tons is conveyed or not, the cost of inspection staff, and so on, these things are constant, and yet you add all that, so that it becomes impossible for the trader to send his goods from place to place.

My Honourable friend suggested that, in the case of paddy, in Madras, there has been a reduction of about 16 per cent on the S.I.Ry. and 7 to 24 per cent. elsewhere. But my Honourable friend knows, none better, at any rate the fact has been dinned into him day after day for the last three months that the price of commodities has fallen by 50 to 60 per cent. My Honourable friend gave a very good illustration. He said a ton of coal costs Rs. 3 and a ton of wheat costs Rs. 50. Can you levy the same charge on a ton of coal for transportation as you can on a ton of wheat? I agree, and, therefore, I want my Honourable friend to extend the logic of it to a commodity whose price has fallen very low, abnormally low during the past years, and ask him whether he cannot, with benefit to the trade and the railways, reduce these charges. I agree with him that we do not want any sort of concealed protection under the freight rates. I do not want concealed protection for paddy traffic, through

the freight rates, but I say you have not worked out on the basis whether the trader can bear this rate and whether it is not ultimately profitable to the railways even at a very much more reduced rate to remove the large quantity of paddy which is held in the deltaic tracts of Northern Circars, for instance, to more profitable areas. There has been complaint also that port to port rates differ, and that those rates are much more advantageous than the rates from station to station. It is very difficult, owing to the complicated nature of these things, to arrive at accurate statistics, but I should like to emphasise one point which has been brought out by my young friend Mr. Mahapatra regarding the classification of goods. Originally, before 1921-22, goods were classified into five classes. Now, at present these goods are classified into 10 classes. You will find eight of these classes are merely the result of splitting up of the first four classes of the original classification of five classes, and that the ninth or tenth are extraordinary classes of goods. Now, that classification is not a sufficient classification. I have already said that your minimum and maximum are so wide that it does no good at all, and following the precedents of America and England, we should really have a standard rate, rather than a minimum and maximum rate. I say further that you should have a classification of a greater detail. In England, the classification goes to 21 lists. Here you have got only ten lists and, that also, after a good deal of agitation on the subject. Your classification is not sufficiently detailed. It does not apply to all classes of goods. It does not take into consideration the characteristics of the goods, and, therefore, that classification works hardship also on the person who has to send these goods. In England, for instance, the Ministry of Transport in the year 1920 appointed a Committee to consider this very question, and one of the recommendations of that Committee was that for the future the principle of fixing maximum scales and allowing the railway company to fix actual rates within those maximum scales should be abandoned and the actual standard rates and tolls should be fixed by an independent tribunal. Another important recommendation—they made about 15 recommendations—was that the classification should be divided into a greater number of classes than now exist. Sir William Acworth, one of the greatest authorities on railway finance and railway matters generally, in his very interesting book on the "Elements of Railway Economics", says that the railway classification of goods is the foundation on which the edifice of railway rates is built up. I want to know whether this classification cannot be revised and whether, with greater detail and more attention to the nature of the goods carried, this new classification cannot be brought into existence. I venture to submit that the old classification of 1922 is very much out of date today, that goods traffic has increased, the classes of goods that are conveyed have increased. The nature of the requisites for the traders is increasing. Therefore, the time has come for the revision of the classification.

I want to refer lastly to one question. Is the Honourable Member satisfied that without legislation by this House he can carry on all these reforms that I have been suggesting? The Railway Act has been there for 35 years nearly and has not yet been amended. All sorts of legislation are coming up before this House. Does my Honourable friend believe that, with reference to these many questions which are so often agitated, he can carry on with a Railway Rates Advisory Committee about whose work I do not wish to say much, but whose attention to these subjects has not been sufficient. The Railway Rates Advisory Committee is

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really appointed by executive order and the questions that are referred to it are complaints of undue preference under section 42 of the Indian Railways Act and complaints that rates are unreasonable in themselves. I would like to know from the Honourable the Commerce Member in how many cases the Railway Rates Advisory Committee has taken up this question of complaint that the rates are unreasonable in themselves. Undue preference one can understand. Merchants come forward because one class of merchants are favoured more than another and the Railway Rates Advisory Committee has dealt with these questions, but unreasonable rates is the subject that this motion has prominently brought before the attention of this House. With reference to the unreasonable rates, I ask whether the Railway Rates Advisory Committee has in a single instance decided upon the point. My Honourable friend may say that those, who are interested in it, the large bulk of the people have not come forward with a complaint before the Government which can be referred to the Railway Rates Advisory Committee, but he realises easily the difficulty of a complaint being made and my Honourable friend, if he wants complaints, must take the statements, made by Honourable Members on the floor of the House, as complaints sufficient for him. How can you get a representative body of traders in paddy, for instance, going up to the Government with a petition or a representative body of traders in fish of my friend's province going up to the Government and putting in a petition that the rates are in themselves unreasonable, not that it is a kind of undue preference. How do the Government expect that these petitions will be coming from these representative bodies? We are the representative persons who bring before you cases of this kind and we suggest that these rates are unreasonable, and I trust that Government will take action on them.

Finally, as I said, I think legislation on these subjects is overdue, and I should be glad to have the views of my Honourable friend, the Commerce Member, whether he thinks that by mere executive action, by a sort of suppressing one interest and elevating another interest through railway companies, over which the Government, at least so far as Company-owned lines are concerned, have not got sufficient control, the position can be kept up very much longer. Sir, I support this motion.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): As one who has tinkered with the rates policy of the almighty Railway Board during the last few years, the Railway Board which is going to be a Statutory Railway Authority, as my London friends have designed it to be, I listened very attentively to the speech of my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, and I felt that the sum and substance of that speech was: "We have no rates policy. If we have a rates policy, it is as much as the traffic can bear." We have no rates policy that will save the industries and the agricultural produce of the country and also add to the prosperity of the country. My Honourable friend, the Railway Member, has not consulted his dual soul—the Commerce Member. If he does so, he would have found in the archives of the Commerce Department various carefully worked out schemes from the industrial bodies, from the various Chambers of Commerce, showing how the tariff policy of the Railway Department is working adversely against the commercial and industrial development of the country. My friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, might have made a slip. My friend made a slip to the extent that the railway rates policy is

designed to help Lancashire and what my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, wanted to convey was that the policy of the bureaucrats of the Railway Board for the last 30 years had been to help European commerce. The rates have been so designed that it allows raw produce to go at a cheap rate for export outside, and it also helps imported produce to go over the country. Government have never had any time to think about it. Government were afraid of the Railway Board before 1924, and, after 1924, when the Railway Finance separation convention took place, the mighty bureaucrat, who sat as the Chief Commissioner of the Railways for the time, simply terrorised the Railway Member of the Government and the poor Railway Member, although he at times saw eye to eye with the complaints on this side of the House, could not proceed further. My Honourable friend, Mr. P. R. Rau, had been very often in the Public Accounts Committee, tried to help us to see through the difficulties, and, in 1932, before, Sir, you were placed in that exalted Chair, when my Honourable friend, Mr. Ranga Iyer, raised the bogey, the issue of the Statutory Railway Authority, in speaking on that you said that the railways had two vital issues before them—one about their future administration and the other was about their rates policy. I will just quote a few lines:

"Take, again, the question of rates which probably is the most fundamental question in railway management..... If I am to ask my Honourable friend the Commerce Member to state what is their rates policy, he will come out with that specious phrase, 'Our rates policy is what the traffic will bear'. But, Sir, that will leave you no wiser than when you raised the question."

Then, I will just quote another passage towards the end:

"But if the future rates policy of India is to be handed over to an impartial rates tribunal, are they to launch upon an entirely new rates policy or are they to work within the maxima and minima rates on which the Indian railway policy is based—that would be an important question. It would be easy to constitute the rates tribunal, but it will be a very difficult matter to say what exactly its functions should be. These, Sir, are all matters on which it would be foolish to venture giving haphazard and off-hand opinions, but I hope that in what I have stated I have made my position clear that the question is of such tremendous importance that a very detailed examination of the whole problem ought to be made by an independent Committee or Commission."

Sir, I wish to draw the attention of my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, to this, because he was not present in 1932. I want to know what the Railway Member, the Chief Commissioner and the Financial Commissioner have done. Mr. P. R. Rau was a member of the Railway Retrenchment Advisory Committee, of which you, Sir, were the President. Have they brought this to the notice of the present Railway Member that this was the demand from the President of the Railway Retrenchment Committee that there should be a Committee to go into the question of the rates and the tariff?

My Honourable friend, Mr. Mudaliar, thought that we had already got a Railway Tribunal. Sir, we have got some sham show somewhere in Delhi which is a peripatetic show of the Railway Board for six months in the year and is styled as the Rates Advisory Committee. It is a show to which the merchants must come with advocates, lawyers and barristers to prove their cases and the Railway Agents thereby also become more extravagant. They spend lakhs of rupees in conducting these cases, and at last very little relief comes to the merchants. My Honourable friend, Sir Darcy Lindsay, pointed out yesterday that the railways were tottering and

[Mr. B. Das.]

living on skimmed milk only, and they wanted to have the cream from the motor transport. The Railway Administrations know that they are having shortly a Statutory Railway Authority. They know that the military policy of the Government of India and of the British Government will back them up to put any high tariff on passenger and goods traffic. My Honourable friend, the Railway Member, might have succeeded in reducing a little the passenger tariff in the North Western Railway, because it was found to be a necessity. Why not the Railway Board should take a lesson from these things? My Honourable friend mentioned in his speech that the passenger traffic has gone down, but the goods traffic has gone up during 1933-34. Has it really gone up? If you refer, Sir, to the report compiled by Dr. Meek in one of the dark rooms of the Secretariat, you will find that the total exports and imports of India amount to somewhere about 250 crores now instead of Rs. 500 crores as they were three or four years ago. If that is the situation, the Railway Board, without any scientific mind—and it is getting now more and more bureaucratic with the idea of having that exalted Statutory Railway Authority—dare not ignore public and scientific criticism from this House. Will my Honourable friend direct the Railway Board to have some fresh blood or to have the advice of an independent Committee which will set down the proper scale of tariff, whether goods or passenger, that will be applicable in India?

Sir, I am grateful to my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, for having raised this question. This is the most vital question on which depends the future economic prosperity of India. My friend, Mr. Mody, if he tells the woes of his Bombay mills and also of his own industrial fraternity of Bombay, will be able to show how Indian produce cannot go to the interior, because the railway freights are so high. Very often my friend, Mr. Neogy, has brought out the example of Sholapur cotton textiles which are paying higher freight than other places. Sir, the Government have no rates policy. The best policy of the Government was to help British commerce and European commerce, and I stand by what I say. I challenge Government to show if they have changed that policy which they started from 1904 for which the railways were built in India, namely, to help the foreign commerce and to help the military policy of the British Government. Therefore, I would ask the Honourable the Commerce Member to pay respect to the advice which you gave, Sir, as the Deputy President and as a prominent Member of the Opposition. Not only that, Sir, but we attach great importance to the advice which you gave as the President of the Railway Retrenchment Committee. Sir, for the advice which you and your colleagues gave we have swallowed many a bitter pill from the Railway Board. The Committee that was to come in winter never came and it ended in the visit of a Mr. Pope. Mr. Pope's advice is that no further retrenchment can be made. We do not call it retrenchment if a few lakhs were saved here and there. Some of us are not as wise or as statesmanlike as you have been and you gave the very modest advice to the Government. Let the Railway Board appoint a Committee to devise the most scientific rates system possible. I would like to know what my Honourable friend, Sir Joseph Bore, has got to say as to why they did not accept that advice. Who was it who stood in its way? Was it the mighty Railway Chief Commissioner or the mighty Financial Commissioner? If the Financial Commissioner studies the railway finances aright, he will find that the railways are facing a grave disaster. No amount of Statutory powers that the Statutory Railway Authority can

give and no amount of combination and co-ordination of road transport with the railway system will bring them the success unless they revise their rates policy. They should base it on a scientific principle and introduce the passenger and goods rates in a humane way which will be applicable in the best interest of the people of the country.

Mr. G. Morgan (Bengal: European): Have free tickets.

Mr. B. Das: It is now free tickets as some of my Honourable friends pointed out yesterday. While there is concession during Christmas, there is no concession during the holidays that belong to the Hindus and the Muslims. They have to study the geography of India, they have to study the Indian mentality and devise their new rates policy, so as to suit the Indian conditions. Otherwise the military and the bayonet and even the inspired help of my Honourable friends of the European Group at the eleventh hour would not save the railways. They are bound to be closed down five years hence.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhamadan Rural): Sir, I do not share the pessimism of my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, that the railways will close down in five years and that the military bayonets and things of that kind will have to go to their rescue. (*A Voice*: "A very silly thing.") That, I consider, "is a very silly thing" as my Honourable friend, Colonel Gidney, truly says for even a responsible member of the Democratic Party to say. But I must say, in fairness to my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, that he was only trying to heighten the colours and to draw the attention of the Government, because he imagined that, by so doing, he would be flogging them into activity. However, there was one good thing in what Mr. Das said. I do not know where he got his quotation from. I was not able to follow it carefully.

Mr. B. Das: The quotation is from the debates of 1932.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Quotation from what?

Mr. B. Das: This is a quotation from the speech of Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty on the 3rd March, 1932, when the Railway Budget was under discussion on your own motion regarding the Statutory Railway Authority.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I was not aware of that. I thought he was quoting from his own speech and had developed such an extraordinary sense.

Mr. B. Das: Myself and the President think alike.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Great minds think alike. (Laughter)

Now, Sir, there is, I believe, a necessity for a Rates Committee. But I do not say like Mr. Das that the Committee has to enquire into and find out a scientific rates policy. No enquiry, in my opinion, is needed.

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

We have competent men who can constitute a Rates Committee and this Committee must immediately take up the grievances which both the agriculturists and the industrialists are suffering from.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What about third class passengers?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I will come to that. Probably, if you extend the scope of this Committee, the grievances of third class passengers and the rates regarding the passenger traffic can also be taken into consideration. But as the present debate is confined purely to agricultural and industrial products, I did not want to digress into the very long standing case of third class passengers. Taking the industrial grievances into consideration, I can say that there are numerous small industries in the country which feel that the foreign rivals, for instance, the Japanese rivals, in certain cases are able to penetrate far into the interior, whereas, owing to the very heavy railway freights, our people are not able to penetrate a fairly long distance to compete with these unequal competitors, competitors on unequal terms, because, in the first place, the sea-freight is so low that the foreign competitor is able to bring his products to the country at a very nominal rate. After that he is prepared to compete with the indigenous industrialist on the same existing rates, he is not afraid of that, because he is subsidised by his own Government or his industrial products are brought into existence by cheaper labour under circumstances which are very very cheap indeed as compared to the circumstance that exists in this country.

Sir, I do not want at this late hour to read quotations as to how under colonial Governments, the industrialists and the agricultural people get very much assistance from the railway people. I know that the Government are very prejudiced in this country against the lowering of the rates and the freights, because, they are taking shelter under the excuse that the railways have to be run on commercial lines. But I say it is a very flimsy excuse (Hear, hear) for the very simple reason,—if they have the time, they can find it out themselves. There are the Railway Board Members who are all overworked. I know that there is a Member of the Railway Board with an assistant who goes into the question of rates and freights, but the Railway Board in this matter has thoroughly failed to help the indigenous industrialist and the crying agriculturist (Hear, hear), and, as they have failed and as my Honourable friend, Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar, has clearly showed in his speech, how the rates tribunal sits too high to be reached by the aggrieved people, as they have failed, the Government cannot shilly-shally and say “we cannot give you a Rates Committee”. I submit, we want a Rates Committee under the Statutory Railway Board scheme so much maligned, working almost like a wind-mill in the brain of my friend, Mr. Das, when he referred to it. We have got under it a Railway Executive, we have also got a Railway Authority, but it is time that we also have a Railway Rates Committee. Whether you wait so long or immediately bring it into existence, this matter has to be taken up by the Government. I think the Honourable Member in charge of this in the Railway Board or one who can speak for him will have to satisfy this House as to how they propose to meet the industrial difficulties in the country, the agricultural difficulties in the country, and whether they propose immediately to handle this matter or, as they have been

doing, sit on the fence. I know that the Honourable the Commerce Member in his speech has referred to the question of rice, wheat, and so on. He has also referred to the coal traffic, but his references, though very helpful so far as indicating how the Government have met the needs, yet are most unhelpful so far as mitigating the actual difficulties goes of the agriculturists and the industrialists in these times of terrible depression. He is resorting to a policy which strikes my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, as the operation of tariff *in terrorem* and while we are absolutely in a very satisfied mood, so far as that particular tariff policy is concerned, as the Government have adopted a policy of discriminating protection, the time has come when they should also follow a corresponding policy of discriminating, what I may call, Railway rates and freights, to help the indigenous industries. This can be easily done and the Rates Committee can do a thing like this, it can send for the industrial people concerned who have grievances and it can ask them "What is the amount of your produce? How much can be put for transport and to what distance if we give this much of facility. If under this shelter you can take your larger quantities of industrial products further, then economically we will not suffer." Therefore, the commercial running of the railway scheme cannot be defeated if, in a really scientific way, they go into the industrial production. I, therefore, submit, there is enough work for a Committee in this matter. They can help the industrialists as well as the railways concerned. While increasing the railway wealth, while increasing the railway earnings, they can also help the development of the industrial wealth of this country. For, as the Honourable the Commerce Member in his very lucid speech said, there is a connection, a good connection between the trade of the country and the railways of the country. We want them now to come forward and establish a golden connection of freights by a reduction of freights wherever necessary, to broadcast the industrial products so that the industrial wealth of the land may increase, so that the pessimistic prophecy of my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, and the Cassandra-like observation of the Press in the country that we are up against a terrible brick wall of calamity, will not come to be true, much less undermine the faith of the people. The people's faith, there is no getting away from the fact, is being undermined. They feel and they genuinely feel that the Government are not assisting them in regard to the promotion of their industries as the Governments of the colonies have assisted and as the Governments of other countries have done. I can speak for hours and give quotation after quotation how, in every self-governing industrial country in the world, the industrial wealth and the industrial productive capacity is increased by the railways co-operating with the industries of the country. And in an agricultural country like this it is absolutely inevitable that in a time of depression the agriculturist should exercise his right to come and ask you for some concession and much more concession. The Government, as the Commerce Member himself said, are overworked. He himself admitted that he is overworked. He has to deal with this railway question and he has to deal with the commercial question; and, as he is self-confessedly overworked, I will advise and I will insist that he should bring into existence a Rates Committee or they should add a man to their Department in the Railway Board, so that the man in charge of the rates and freights will go into this question and remove the grievances of the people.

Sir, this is not a question in which we are indulging in exaggerations.

1 P. M. In this time of depression the agricultural people feel that Government have not stood by them. The industrial people feel that

- [Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

Government have not sufficiently stood by them, so far as rates and freights are concerned. Though I cannot exaggerate this matter, Government have certainly tried to help them by bringing in a tariff wall and by heightening it wherever necessary. But if they want to reap the fullest results in these matters, the proper thing for them is to reduce the freights and to go into the thing, overworked as they are, with the assistance of a Committee of experts or non-officials or both; but the Committee must immediately come into existence and tackle this matter. It is not a question for postponing by a week or a fortnight even.

Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal (Jullundur Division: Non-Muhammadian): Sir, one question may well be brought to the notice of the House even at this late hour of the day. Our chief grievance, as pointed out, has been that neither industries nor agriculture has received that favourable treatment from the railways which they are entitled to expect. I may say, Sir, that my Honourable friend opposite, the Railway Member, is in the position of a benevolent autocrat, and various countries have tried hard to raise loans, etc., to place the railway machinery in the hands of the Government in order that they may be able to manipulate these rates and freights to promote industry and help agriculture. A prominent case of that kind happened in Germany soon after the war of 1870 and Bismarck utilised the whole resources of the State to acquire the railways in order that he might be able to help industries.

Now, Sir, whatever may have been the policy of the railways during the first 40 or 50 years, whether they promoted imports from overseas or promoted exports from this country of agricultural produce outside, I am compelled to say that the policy of the railways, during the last 20 years or so, even when protection has been the guiding policy in the matter of tariffs, has been,—one might almost say,—one of drift and opportunism. Whenever an intensive cry is made from any industry or any quarter, that question is taken up under the stress of the moment. Palliatives are applied and the whole of this business is done, not as a matter of considered and consistent policy, but just to get over the trouble for the time being. As a justification for that remark of mine, I may mention a case which has been prominently mentioned, the case of the Punjab wheat. I shall come to the grievance of the Raja Bahadur, but I just wish to examine the question of relief in freight to the Punjab wheat. The Honourable Member in charge of Railways was pleased to tell us that our object was to give relief openly and not secretly and the relief which was given to the Punjab agriculturist for getting rid of his wheat was when the Punjab Government gave the railways compensation for the relief in rates. Now, Sir, the railways cannot claim much credit for that. If it is the Punjab Government that pays the railways, what are the railways for? It is a step-motherly treatment. The railways say they have charged a certain rate, and it does not matter whether the agriculturist pays or the Punjab Government pays. Now, Sir, if the railways had taken up that national policy, which we are entitled to expect of them,—because the mere earning of dividend is not the sole concern of the railways although crores of rupees of capital have been invested,—the real policy for the railways should have been, as it would have been if the railways had been the concern of the Punjab Government, to see that the agriculturist does get relief in the matter of disposing of his produce. And my learned friend, the Raja Bahadur, was pleased to tell us that the Punjab wheat leads to a strong

power of lungs. I may point out to him,—it is a great compliment,—that what I would like to see is that to the nimble brain of the Madrassis, with due respect to all who are interested in Madras, it is necessary to add the power of strong lungs. If that is so, the railways should have carried on a campaign in Madras of "Eat More Wheat" and should have lowered the freight to a few annas indeed, so that all the Punjab wheat would have travelled to Madras. My Honourable friend over there knows a good deal of Madras, and the Railway Board is certainly not without experience of Madras. If they had done it at that time, reduced the freight on wheat and carried on a campaign in Madras of "Eat More Wheat" and the Raja Bahadur had been able to claim a stronger power of lungs than he says he has, although I do not believe it,—if the railway had done a thing of that kind, then I could understand that the railway had a wheat policy. But as things stand at present, it has neither a policy nor anything which can be designated by that name. It is only a matter of drift for the time being.

Now, Sir, the real trouble which I can visualise in a matter of this kind is that we have passed through just three or four years of depression. The problem before the railways was not to make two ends meet. That is a small problem indeed, because these railways are a national asset on which huge capital of the nation has been sunk. They are an instrument for ameliorating the lot of the people, to help the industries and help agriculture at a particular period; and one wishes that a very bold experiment in the line was tried by the railways. They congratulate themselves and we may also congratulate them that they have passed the worst period of depression, but what is the constructive policy to their credit? Here also there are various categories of goods, six or eight of them, in which you can find very strange combinations put forward. The Honourable Member for Railways was pleased to tell us that it is impossible to put the same freight on coal as you put on wheat, because wheat is something like Rs. 50 a ton and coal is about Rs. 3 a ton. Now, Sir, various examples come to mind, but one will find from this pamphlet which I have here that chemicals are placed in the same category as food grains. Bicarbonate of soda, circus instruments and survey instruments are all placed there. These things are of a very large value and no regard is paid in fixing the rate to the question of value. One can almost say that these various categories into which tariff has been divided were fixed long ago and no scientific attempt has been made to classify them either on the basis of value or on the basis of what, I think, is far more important, national interest. If that is so, it appears to be a queer proposition to be defending them on the score of value.

Now, Sir, I was very much interested to know from the Honourable Member that in the case of sugar they have made some attempt to reduce fares on the East Indian and the G. I. P. Railways. But that is merely part of the problem, because we find that, so far as sugar alone is concerned, its output in the country during this year and the next is likely to exceed even the demand in all North India. They have taken no bold policy that the rates to the ports and specially the South Indian ports will be such that the sugar produced in this country should be able to compete with the sugar from abroad. In fact, these are some of the problems which the Railway Rates Tribunal, if one were constituted, would have to look into. At the present moment one can say that all that we have is a tinkering with the problem and that a bold and scientific attitude

[Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal.]

ould be adopted towards these questions of rates which will tend to help agriculture as well as to lead to industrial improvement in all parts of the country.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, Mr. Maswood Ahmad has raised a very important and intricate issue about rates by the present motion. By a slight manipulation of these rates, trade and industry can be made or marred; and our complaint on this side is that no scientific investigation, as my friend, Mr. Das, put it, regulates these railway rates under the present system. We find that different rates prevail on different railways. That is anomalous, because though there are still a few private-owned railways, they are all under the Railway Board, and yet, to our surprise, we find that for the same commodity, the maxima and the minima rates on the same article vary in different systems of railways. I shall confine myself now to a few industries that concern Bengal.

First, I would like to take up the question of the rates about mustard seed and mustard oil. It was brought to the notice of the Members from Bengal that formerly large quantities of mustard seed were taken to Bengal and a large number of machines were started for manufacturing mustard oil. But due to a manipulation of rates on mustard oil and mustard seed, ruin has now been brought on the once prosperous oil industry in Bengal. I understand that the case has been represented to the Railway Board, and so it is, what may be called, *sub judice*, and I stop with merely drawing the attention of the Railway Authorities to that.

The other grievance is about Bengal coal. I understand that the rate for coal in the East Indian and Bengal Nagpur Railways is higher than on the G. I. P. and the B., B. and C. I. Railways, and the result is that, though on account of natural advantages it was possible from the Bengal mines to supply coal at Ahmedabad at economic cost, yet, due to these differential rates, it has now become impossible. I understand that a telescopic rate is charged for coal, and, under that system, the rate for the first 300 miles is much higher than for the next 300 to 1,000 miles; but what happens is that for the Bengal coal, if it has to be supplied to Ahmedabad, the rate for the first 300 miles is much more than the rate for the first 300 miles that is charged on the Central India coal. I do not like to go into these details, because, in a motion like this, it is not possible to do full justice exhaustively to these points: I merely refer to it to draw attention of the Railway Board that, in fixing these rates, they should pay special attention, so that one industry may not suffer on account of the mere whim in fixing the rates of different systems of railways in India. I fully agree with the Honourable the Commerce Member's proposition that the rates should be fixed in a way that should be economically sound; but I maintain that the higher rate need not be necessarily economic. It has been found that a lower rate

may be much more advantageous than a higher rate in the long run if it can help in organising large industries that will be carried in a particular line. So the Railway Board should not merely confine its attention by saying "We cannot lower this rate, because anything less than these will not cover the expenses". It may be found that if for some time there is a loss, the encouragement, that the industries will get due to a lower rate and greater help in organising and developing industries, will more than pay the temporary loss in the long run. I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Board to this special aspect. The railways potentially can help in a great way in developing the trades and industries of the country, and fortunately our Commerce Member also happens to be the Railway Member. So, as regards fixing of these rates, it should not be merely a mechanical or technical thing; but due attention should be paid to rival or competing interests of the different industries in the different parts of the country. Particularly, attention should be paid to the point that for the same article different freights should not be charged on the different systems of railways in this country, thus destroying and ruining industries in some parts of the country. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi (Dacca *cum* Mymensingh : Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, nobody regrets more than myself that I have not been able to be present in this Honourable House and take part in the deliberations of this most important subject of the Railway Budget. Today is the last day, and I desire to make my submission as briefly as possible, with regard to coal freights.

You may be aware, Sir, two years ago I raised my little finger in this House against the methods of the railways in purchasing their coal and administering their collieries, and I only know at what cost to myself I divulged the serious defects that prevailed in their purchases and what a serious loss Government were incurring year in and year out in the administration of their collieries and in the purchase of their coal. Thanks to my Honourable friend, the Commerce and Railway Member, he has taken up all the suggestions that I had made, and today I feel flattered that the public exchequer is saving not less than a crore of rupees.

Sir, we have been hearing very much about the protection of industries, and so forth. What about the protection of Bengal coal? The Bengal coal trade, Mr. President, is tottering, and this is largely due to the high railway rates. I am quoting from the Report for the Public Accounts Committee submitted by the Bengal Nagpur Railway:

"Of this total decrease, coal alone accounted for a drop of Rs. 9,78,000. Although the earnings from coal carried for the public increased by Rs. 5,20,000, due chiefly to the imposition of the surcharge of 15 per cent. and to the carriage of smaller tonnage of rebateable Coal for the Steel Companies, coal carried for foreign railways decreased considerably involving a loss of Rs. 13,00,000. This was due to the Railways in South and Western India obtaining supplies from sources nearer their home stations, and to the diversion of larger quantities by the sea route from Calcutta, which latter not only escaped the surcharge, but in addition, gained the benefit of a rebate"

Mr. P. R. Rau (Financial Commissioner, Railways): What is the document from which the Honourable Member is reading?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: I am reading from the Reports for the year 1931-32, and 1933-34. I think it is a very recent Report.

[Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi.]

Sir, it was last year that the Government made up their mind not to send the coal for the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway and the South Indian Railway by the sea route and feed the steamship companies, but to send it by their own railway and earn the freight. Now, the position is this, I shall quote from the latest Report and then make my comments. This is a Report, again, from the Bengal Nagpur Railway for the Public Accounts Committee for the years 1930-31 and 1931-32:

"The rates for the carriage of coal, from collieries situated on the G. I. P. Railway, in the Central Provinces, were reduced in 1926,"

—Mr. President, bear this in mind,—

"to a scale lower than that in force on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, or on the East Indian Railway. It is understood that in 1926, the coal from the Central Provinces collieries was not considered as good as the best second class Bengal coal, and coupled with the fact that reduced rates would increase development, they were eventually sanctioned. Since then,"

—the Report says—

"Since then, these conditions have changed. Considerable contracts have been given to these collieries to supply coal to the Railways, and I was informed by the Chief Mining Engineer"

—this is what the Agent says,—

"and I was informed by the Chief Mining Engineer to the Railway Board, that much larger contracts are likely to be given next year. This coal is said to be equal to the best second class Bengal coal and the output rose to 513,347 tons in 1930. It is interesting to note that the coal traffic, booked from all Pench Valley Collieries, for the year ending the 31st March, 1922, amounted to 281,081 tons, and produced Rs. 20,19,499 freight while for the year ending the 31st March 1930, the same collieries despatched 513,347 tons, and the railway earnings came to Rs. 20,48,743, or approximately the same freight for double the tonnage. These and other factors including improved methods of utilising inferior coal in Mills and Factories, now give the Central Provinces collieries a very great advantage over those situated in the Bengal and Bihar and Orissa coal fields, in the markets of Western India."

Now, the position is this. They have a telescopic rate, and, therefore, the carriage of Bengal coal from the colliery has got a different rate, and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway gets the advantage of that difference of the lower rate, because they start from Nagpur itself. They take the lowest rate from there, and they transport their coal to longer distances. The Bengal coal suffers, because it has to pay a higher rate up to Nagpur; and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway takes advantage of the lower rate which prevails in Nagpur to carry their coal to Bombay or Ahmedabad.

Then, Sir, the Chief Commissioner for Railways said in the Council of State that a surcharge of 15 per cent. on coal had given a larger income and it had not reduced the coal trade, but here, as I have pointed out already, the Agent of the Bengal Nagpur Railway says that the surcharge has killed the coal trade, and it must be so. What is the result now? On account of the higher rates which you have fixed for coal, people are not likely to purchase coal at all; they are trying to put in engines for crude oil. Once all those who want coal find that crude oil will be cheaper, they will go in largely for crude oil engines, and the whole of the coal trade will be lost. Therefore, Sir, the suggestion made this morning regarding a Rates Committee has my strongest support. I think a Committee is urgently necessary to go into this matter. If such a Committee were appointed, it would be of great advantage to the Railways and also to the

coal trade. Sir, I support this in the fervent hope that the Railway Member will take this suggestion seriously and appoint a Rates Committee to go into the whole matter without much delay, so that that Committee may settle these points once for all.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Sir, any one who has read the history of railway construction in India will remember that railway construction was undertaken originally with a two-fold object,—the first one was political, that is to say, the railways were expected to facilitate the government of the country by the British authorities, and the second object was promotion of foreign commercial interests. As a matter of fact, when about three quarters of a century ago, the proposals were initiated, it was pointed out by the commercial interests of England that the construction of railways in India would facilitate the outflow of cotton, particularly for the benefit of the British cotton manufacturers. I think that is the point to which my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, was referring when he said that the rates are fixed for the purpose of promoting Lancashire interests, but perhaps that statement does not hold good today as it did in those early days, because, as we know, so far as cotton is concerned, other countries have taken greater advantage of these lower rates than Great Britain. But, Sir, the fact remains that the railway rates policy has largely been determined by a desire to facilitate the export and import trade of the country, and not so much to develop and improve the internal centres of industrial activities.

My friend, the Diwan Bahadur, has already referred to a debate that took place in the old Imperial Legislative Council in 1912 at the instance of the late Sir Vithaldas Thackersey. Three years later, that is, in 1915, we find that Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola again raised the question in a debate in the old Imperial Legislative Council where he pointed out that the railway rates policy had been determined very largely in the interests of our foreign trade. He made certain very definite complaints. We know further that when the Industrial Commission was appointed, they recorded a very large body of opinion on this point, and when the Acworth Committee met, that class of evidence was repeated before it. I should very much like my friend, the Honourable Member in charge, to tell us in reply as to whether there has been any change in that policy, apart from the adjustment of individual rates for the benefit of individual traffic. That is the broad issue which I should like to be answered on this occasion.

Now, Sir, I remember to have read in the evidence, that was tendered before the Acworth Committee, statements made by responsible men, like the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, as it then was before it was taken over by the State, that the railways attached as great an importance to the handling of foreign traffic as to internal trade. Of course, it was not admitted that the Indian railways were neglecting internal trade, but it seemed to me, reading between the lines, that they attached greater importance to foreign traffic, both inwards and outwards, than to the development of the internal trade.

Mr. B. Das: Hear, hear. That is our complaint.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Yesterday we were discussing the question of the Statutory Railway Authority. Two members of that Committee have complained that nothing has been done so far by the Government for the purpose of giving a Statutory power to the Rates Tribunal in the matter of fixation of rates; I should have very much expected Honourable Members

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

themselves to have raised this point in the London Committee itself. If Honourable Members were to refer to paragraph 5 of the London Committee report, they would find that the first sentence has a great similarity indeed to the language of the first sentence in section 127 of the South Africa Union Act. But when I read out that portion of section 127 of the South Africa Act, Honourable Members will realise the difference between the language in paragraph 5 of the report and that particular clause. This is how the South Africa Act reads.

"The railways, ports, and harbours of the Union shall be administered on business principles, due regard being had to agricultural and industrial development within the Union and promotion, by means of cheap transport, of the settlement of an agricultural and industrial population in the inland portions of all provinces of the Union."

It may be that the problem that the South African Union had before it was somewhat different from the one that we have to deal with in the present instance, but, judging from the speeches that have been made, including the speeches by the two Honourable Members of the London Committee itself, it seems to me that they would have been justified in putting in a clause like that in their report instead of the very vague and general terms in which they have worded the first sentence of paragraph 5. I am very glad that my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, has raised the question of the coal freight. I am in a position to bear him out when he says that, due to the high coal freight, the coal industry is suffering from a good deal of handicap. I remember what the Chief Commissioner of Railways, Sir Guthrie Russell, said in the other House while explaining the Railway Budget the other day, where he sought to justify not merely the existing rates, but also the surcharge, on the ground that the coal traffic, instead of showing any diminution, had actually increased. That brings me to the question as to what is the principle that should determine the fixation of a rates policy and the construction of a rates structure. My Honourable friend, the Commerce Member, has said that the railways are to fix what he described as economic rates. I do not know what he exactly meant, but, as far as I have been able to study the question, all over the world the rates fixed are expected to be such as, what has been termed in very well known words, "what the traffic can bear".

A few years ago, we had a Financial Commissioner in this very House who gave a very curious interpretation of that formula. I asked him what was it that this formula, what the traffic can bear, meant. He said in effect—I am not quoting his words—he said that we can fix rates at such a level as would enable us to get the maximum of revenue without losing the traffic. That is to say, so long as the traffic is not lost to the railway, the railway would be justified in pushing up the rates. That is a most erroneous interpretation, as anybody, who has read anything about railway economics, knows. This formula, what the traffic can bear, has everywhere in the books on railway economics been explained as a kind of principle of equity: that is to say, you are expected to fix a rate which you can justly ask a particular commodity to bear. Nothing depends upon the volume of the traffic which you can get on the basis of a particular rate. The whole question is, are you justified, having regard to the economic value, having regard to the volume of the traffic that you are going to handle,—are you justified in fixing a rate at a particular figure? It is an entirely equitable consideration. It is no answer on the part of Sir

Guthrie Russell to say, look at the traffic that I am getting on the basis of the existing rates, as he said with reference to coal. It is an absolutely fallacious proposition. The Railway Authorities are expected to enquire into the present economic position of that industry and then fix the rate. I was really surprised to find that a responsible man in charge of the railways could possibly make such an erroneous statement, which shows what great ignorance prevails in this country even amongst responsible railway officials of the very elementary principles of railway economics. Sir William Acworth has, in one of his books, stated that the days of the rule of thumb man are gone, so far as the railway administration is concerned. I think the days have not yet gone of the rule of thumb man, so far as Indian railways are concerned.

Mr. B. Das: That is why they want a Statutory Authority.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: It is not a question of assistance. My Honourable friend talked of assistance to agricultural industry. He said, if you want assistance, you ask for it in an open manner, you will get it in an open manner, just as what happened in the case of the Punjab wheat. It is not a question of charity. There is something else involved in this question. As I said, it is a question of equitable principle.

I just want to refer to a few points made by my Honourable friend, the Raja Bahadur. He was casting longing looks at the rice market in Bengal and he wanted a reduction in the rates for the benefit of Madras rice so as to enable it to secure a foothold in the Bengal market. I entirely admit that unsatisfactory as our statistical information is, Bengal is a deficit Province, that is to say, Bengal imports somewhat more of rice than she exports. Now, Sir, we find so far as markets in Bengal are concerned, the imports consist largely of Burma rice, and I find further from certain statistics, which have been made available to me along with a few other Members of this House, of the prices of rice by the courtesy of my Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, that there is a good deal of difference in the price of Burma rice and Bengal rice, and that, in spite of the present depression, the difference between the price of Burma rice and Bengal rice has more or less been maintained at a uniform level throughout all the fluctuations in the prices during the past few years. The difference would be in the neighbourhood of about a rupee per maund. It is a considerable difference, which seems to me to show that there is no direct competition between Burma rice and Bengal rice. There is, it seems to me, a distinct demand for that type of rice from a distinct class of consumers in Bengal. It is a question of taste, as Honourable Members very well know. Take the case of Madras rice. I find that comparing the prices of Madras rice at the three centres for which we have got figures, they approximate more or less to the prices in Bengal. The difference is little indeed. The complaint made by my Honourable friend from Madras is that the prices are very low, and they expect a better price for their rice. Otherwise, there would be no meaning in asking for lower rates which might facilitate their securing outside markets. Therefore, if we find that, under existing circumstances, there is practically no difference between the price of Madras rice and comparable qualities of Bengal rice, what is the benefit that my Honourable friend expects to get if, for instance, the railway freight were to be reduced? If that enables Madras to reach the Bengal markets with greater facility, it might have either of two effects. If that rice is in a position to compete with Bengal rice, that complicates the situation in Bengal, because we also in

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our Province have been complaining of the lower prices of rice. If it does not succeed in competing with Bengal, what is the use of sending that rice to Bengal? It cannot compete with Burma rice, which is much cheaper than either Madras or Bengal. But that is by the way. It was a point which was made by my Honourable friend, the Raja Bahadur, very casually, but I thought that I might as well point out the exact position in this matter.

Now, Sir, my Honourable friend the Diwan Bahadur, referred to the Acworth Committee's recommendation regarding the desirability of having a Statutory Authority for the purpose of regulating the rates, so far as the Company-managed lines are concerned. What the Acworth Committee recommended was not that this House should legislate for the purpose of fixing any definite rates apart from the maxima or minima, or any standard rates, as he described them; but what the Committee in paragraph 148 had in mind was that a body should be set up—I think they had in mind the Rates Tribunal which they recommended in another part of the report—when they said that a body should be set up with Statutory Authority for the purpose of regulating these rates. Here, again, as my Honourable friend, the Member in charge, knows, although the Acworth Committee had made a definite recommendation for the setting up of a full fledged Tribunal to determine these vexed questions of rates, it was the great influence which the Companies exert, in England particularly, that did not permit the Government to set up a Tribunal of the character contemplated by the Acworth Committee. There, again, these very contracts, which my Honourable friend wanted to be controlled by a Statute of this Legislature, were flung in the face of the authorities in England and in India, and they said: "Look here. How can you, in the face of these very definite terms in the contract which give us a free hand in fixing any definite rate within the two limits of maxima and minima, set up a Tribunal which will be a final authority in regard to these matters?" That was really the trouble, and I really do not know why my Honourable friends did not raise this very point in England when they met in that Committee. I find that, in paragraph 11 of the Report, they make a reference to the maxima and minima rates and fares in so far as they relate to State-owned lines. It cannot, therefore, be said that their attention was not drawn to the question of the maxima and the minima rates. Why is it, I want to know, that they failed to bring up the question of the authority to control the rates in the case of Company lines as was recommended so very definitely so long ago as 1921 by an authoritative Committee of the character of the Acworth Committee.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member may conclude now.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I do not think I can usefully take up the time of the House any further. I am very glad that my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, brought up this very interesting question for discussion, and I do hope that when the Government of India make up their mind on the question of the Statutory Authority, they will go into this very important question as to the position and powers that are to be assigned to the Rates Tribunal so far as the fixation and the regulation of the rates and fares are concerned.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, I rise to address the House just for a few minutes as an absolute layman on the subject; I may even say that in some respects an ignoramus, and I should not have risen if I had not had several difficulties which no other Honourable Member has yet solved. If I may refer just for two minutes to a question that was discussed this morning, namely, when and how often Members on the opposite Benches should speak on a debate of this sort, I would respectfully suggest that the practice followed in Local Councils,—and especially in the Bombay Council of which I have some experience,—might with advantage to Government be followed here, namely, that not the Honourable Member himself, but the very able gentlemen who sit behind him may now and then give us the privilege of hearing their voices. If these Honourable gentlemen had given us that privilege, I might not have risen to speak. I think it might conduce to curtail discussion. We on this side of the House have the privilege of making mistakes, of quoting wrong figures, of misapplying figures. That is our privilege. We are non-officials, we are laymen, but when a single Member on this side of the House quotes a wrong figure or misapplies it, and if an Honourable Member on the other side of the House would immediately rise and point out the mistake, I venture to suggest, that no other Member on this side of the House would repeat that mistake or misapply those figures again. I will try to explain what my difficulty as a layman is. Member after Member has risen in this Honourable House to ask for concession rates for certain commodities. So far as I can see, every commodity in India has been referred to—coal, wheat, rice, cotton, oil seeds and fish. Then, may I ask, Mr. President why some Honourable Member on the other side did not rise to explain that if all these commodities are to be carried at concession rates, where does the surplus in the Budget come in. We are at the time faced with deficit Budgets. We have not been able to give to the general revenues their dues from the Railway Budget. On the other hand, we have been asked to allow Government to tap the Depreciation Fund. Sir, from that point of view, I would really have liked some information. My Honourable friend, the Member in charge, laid down the general principle that if a concession is to be made, let it be made openly and let it be one of direct assistance to a commodity, let us know what we are doing; if it is a concession, then let the tax-payer know that through the railways this subsidy is being given to this commodity—a very sound principle, indeed, I agree—but, as my Honourable friends here have said that is not going quite far enough. It is the duty of the railways to see that no industry is crushed out of existence, due to railway freights; it is also the duty of the Department to see that a commodity that may have had a hold on a certain part of India should not cease to be able to send that commodity to that part of India, due to an increase in freights. Those principles have to be followed, and the general tax-payer has to pay for them. My friend, Mr. Neogy, referred to that much-discussed phrase—“the rates that the traffic can bear”. I have heard several interpretations of that phrase, and one of them has been that, since the railways are bound to give concessions openly, deliberately, to certain commodities in order to encourage agriculture or industry, the railways also have the right to fleece other industries or commodities, provided that, that industry or agriculture will allow themselves to be fleeced; that is to say, as long as they continue to co-operate and send their goods by rail. I think, Sir, that is not a correct interpretation to place on the phrase, “the rates that the traffic can bear”. I quite realise that an industry or a

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commodity, that can bear to pay a fair rate of profit, should be made to pay it, but it is not right to bring it to the verge of bankruptcy in order to pay for concessions that you may have to give to other industries and commodities. Sir, I think that it is time the Honourable Member in charge of Railways did give us an authoritative interpretation of those words and the policy that is followed due to that interpretation. Sir, industrialists and agriculturists, whether in times of prosperity or depression, want cheap freight. I have no doubt that so long as human nature remains what it is—and it is going to continue as long as this world lasts—we shall have Honourable Members in this House, who represent industry, commerce, or agriculture, demanding the reduction of rates, and that is going to continue whether you have Swaraj or whether the present form of Government continues, so I would suggest that for the future there may be a Rates Tribunal which should take up the responsibility of deciding this very vexed question on judicial lines, after a judicial investigation, and whose voice shall be final. I know Government will be delegating one of its most important functions to such a Committee if the suggestion is carried out, but, Sir, we are asked on this side of the House to delegate to a small Committee called the Statutory Railway Board some of our functions, and if it is to the interest of the country, the interests of all concerned that *we* should delegate those functions, I think Government might also consider the question of delegating some of their powers, may be one of the most important powers, to a Committee which will act judicially, equitably and whose decisions shall be final and—I venture to suggest—a Committee whose judgment will be respected as today the judgments of High Courts throughout this country are respected and followed.

Sir, in the old days, so far as I can remember, the complaint of non-official Members was that the railways favoured foreign trade; I 3 P.M. have read speeches of Honourable Members who said in the old Councils that the railways were constructed for the benefit of foreign trade; those days, I trust, have passed. The railways are in existence to encourage the industries and the agricultural products of this country (Hear, hear), and I would not be averse to the railways encouraging our industries and our agricultural products even if thereby we adversely hit foreign trade. (Hear, hear.) Sir, every country takes advantage of its railways for this purpose and I would not be averse to seeing our railways used to encourage our industries and our agricultural products, and I would not be averse to our profits being reduced, even to facing deficits, if those deficits are due to such encouragement and not to maladministration. (Hear, hear.) Sir, these would be the principles I would lay down, but I would certainly guard the profits of our railways if it came to a keen competition between one part of India and another part of India. Sir, I would, therefore, guard the financial interests of the railways, but speaking for myself, I would be quite prepared—I repeat—to face a deficit in the railways if that deficit is due to, or caused by the encouragement to industries and agriculture.

Some Honourable Members: The question may now be put.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That the question be now put”.

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, I will now conclude the speech which I began a little while ago and I would like to do so by referring to some of the individual points which have been raised since I last rose to my feet. I do not know whether my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, really meant to suggest that we should raise the rates for agricultural products to the ports.

Mr. B. Das: I did not say any such thing. I leave it to the experts

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: My Honourable friend has only to read the statistics of sea-borne trade to see what an important part agricultural products play in the economic life of the country and how vital it is that we should find foreign markets for these products. Everything, therefore, that can be done to stimulate the flow of agricultural products to the ports should, I think, be done. (Applause.) My Honourable friend, Mr. Das, also made it a cause of complaint that though concessions were given on the occasion of certain Christian festivals like Christmas, so far no attention was paid to the festivals of other communities. May I say that he seems to have forgotten that there are such things as Puja concessions.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: What about the Id?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: I will not enter into the communal field at the moment.

Then, Sir, my Honourable friend, Mr. Aggarwal, suggested that we should take no credit to ourselves for the experiment that was made in 1931 in regard to the lowering of the wheat rate between the Punjab and Karachi. He is quite right. I do not take any credit for that. I would only point out that on that occasion our calculations showed that the lower rates in the four months in which they were in force resulted in a loss of something like 16 lakhs. But I would point out to him that we have, as an economic and a business proposition, during the course of last year, definitely reduced the rates for Punjab wheat and I will give my Honourable friend the rates that we are charging. I can assure him that we are not calling upon the Punjab Government to reimburse us for any loss that might result as a consequence of those lower rates. I would point out to him that the previous rate for wheat from Lyallpur to Howrah was Rs. 1-3-4 a maund and we have now reduced that to Rs. 1-0-4 a maund, the reduction is equivalent to something like 16 per cent. We have reduced the wheat rate from Kanewal to Howrah from Rs. 1-3-11 to Rs. 1-0-4, a reduction of 18 per cent. We have reduced in like manner the wheat rates from Aligarh and Chandausi by something like 10 per cent. We are not yet in possession of the results of those reductions, but we shall again review the figures at the end of April, 1934, when we are in possession of the results of these reduced rates.

Sir, I am in entire agreement with my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, when he said that a higher rate is not necessarily an economic or the most advantageous rate. That is the principle upon which we have been acting, and I can assure him that that will be the principle which will guide us in the future.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, complimented us for having at last accepted certain suggestions made by himself. I gladly accept the

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: I am coming to that. I think, Sir, that the voice of the Punjābees is much more effective on account of their being a martial race, and that is the reason why my Honourable friend has given them these concessions. But the Biharees and Bengalees, who are not a martial race, have not been shown this sympathy in the matter of rice. There is no place for the Biharees, because there is no Biharee to represent them in the Executive Council. Of course, in days gone by, there was Sir Ali Imam; after him, the interest of Bihar has always been overlooked.

Now, Sir, the logic of my Honourable friend is that the question of value has also to be considered when the rate for different commodities is fixed up. In this connection I would like to say that my Honourable friend has quoted that the selling rate for coal is very cheap and the selling rate for rice and other commodities is high and so the rate for carrying the rice is high. Now, what is the selling rate for your sodi bicarb? You charge for it also the same rate for carrying. The rice is not as valuable a thing as sodi bicarb is, and yet we find that the charge for carrying rice and sodi bicarb is the same. Thus, your logic falls.

Then, Sir, I would like to suggest that in the future Rates Advisory Committee members of different Provinces should be represented and there should also be on it the Members of the Provincial as well as the Central Legislatures.

I am thankful to all my Honourable friends who have supported me. It is now clear that all the sections of this House do not like the prevailing rate and they feel that it is unreasonable and I hope my Honourable friend will do something for the agriculturists, especially for rice, and that the rates will be revised. My purpose has been served, as has been said by my Honourable friend himself, and so I do not want to press this motion to a division. I beg leave of the House to withdraw it.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

System of Appeals.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs 100."

and this I do in order to raise the question of the system of appeals.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Sir Abdur Rahim, one of the Panel of Chairmen.]

It was pointed out today that in all the debates Government had always the last word and we never had a chance of replying and the only chance that we have is on the next motion. So there is one very important point to which I should like to refer. My Honourable friend, the Railway Member, quoted yesterday the rates of different countries, in cents, in yens, in pfennings and in pies, and then said that the rates in India were much lower than the rates in other countries.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Is my Honourable friend "appealing" against those rates? (Laughter.)

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: No, just wait and see. This particular question of comparing the rates by means of their exchange value is an incorrect proposition. I had an opportunity to discuss this question with the Secretary of the Union Internationale des chemins de fer, and I said that, if you want to compare the rates in different countries, it is not correct simply to compare them by the rate of exchange of different countries. What you ought to do is either to take the index of the cost of living or take the index of the wages and take a ratio of the rate per mile to the index of either of the two. That is, you take the price of the ticket per mile and also find out one of two things, either the cost of living or the wages and take the ratio; and then alone you can compare whether the rates in a particular country are higher or lower than in other countries. The same is the case about comparison in the same country at different times. If you compare the rates in 1926-27 with the rates in 1934, then you could not compare it in terms of rupees, annas and pies, but you have to compare it with this special ratio, that is, the ratio of the rate of third class fare per mile divided by the index of either wages or of the cost of living. And I think if you compare it in this way, you will find that railway rates and freights in India are much higher than the rates and freights in other countries. I have not worked out yet the detailed theory.

Now, coming to the cut itself, the present Railway Member's predecessor, Sir George Rainy, on the floor of this House, in 1931, said,—and I entirely agree with him: "It would be unfair to single out this department alone for special treatment and that, if a reduction was finally found to be necessary, it should be general and applicable to all departments of Government". This is the view which the late Commerce Member took in 1931, and, following the same principle, he upheld that the Lee Concessions that were granted to the general services in other departments should also continue in the case of the railways. But the circular issued in connection with the treatment of their employees by the Railway Department is something very different from the spirit indicated on the floor of the House by the late Commerce Member. I have got before me the rules regulating the discharge and dismissal of State Railway non-gazetted Government servants, and there it is laid down:

"The Railway Department being a commercial department, service in it must in its nature differ from service in other Government departments, and continuance of employment must be subject to the tests and conditions enforced by large commercial concerns."

Therefore, in one case, when you come to the higher officials, you demand that the concessions should be the same as in other departments of the Government of India, but when you come to the treatment meted out by yourself to your own employees, you follow entirely different principles and you lay down that it is a commercial concern and we need not follow the principles or the conditions of service laid down in other Departments. Either have one or the other, but you cannot consider it as a commercial department in one case and as a department parallel to the other departments of the Government of India in the other. And I maintain that, so long as we do not change the principles, the same conditions of service ought to be applied to the railway servants which may be fixed for the servants in other Departments of the Government of India, and any rules that may be laid down by the Home Department about the condition of service should *ipso facto* be binding on the service

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of the State-managed railways, and there should be no differentiation of any kind whatsoever.

Having discussed this principle, I now come to the practice followed in regard to appeals. No doubt, as far as the rules are concerned, they do not look very objectionable. The rules are so drafted, but they provide a loophole in giving the power to the Agents and other people to delegate their authority to subordinate officers. This particular provision in the rules has been rather misused in a large number of cases, or, I may say, in almost all cases, and I think it is time when we ought to consider these things very seriously. What really happens is this, that, in the case of the subordinate officer, he applies for an appeal. The discharge order was practically given by the head of the department in the Divisional Superintendent's office and this discharge order was written on the report of a particular clerk. He sends his appeal to the Agent. The Agent has no special officer to deal with these cases, but a certain clerk in his office sends the appeal back to the Divisional Superintendent for disposal. The Divisional Superintendent, on the other hand, sends it again to the head of the department who reported the discharge and then it is sent back again to the clerk, and the clerk presents the application of the leave with only a small memo. that this is the appeal of Mr. A. who was discharged on such and such date. But frequently no details are brought to the notice of the officers and the poor man, without his appeal being read by any responsible officer, gets the application back with a note that the Agent regrets that he sees no reason to interfere in this matter. Now, he has got one more option left to him which is really given to all the servants of His Majesty, that is, an appeal to the Viceroy for mercy. Now, the application is sent to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Private Secretary to His Excellency naturally sends it to the Railway Board and that is the only thing that the Private Secretary could do. It is assumed that the Railway Board has some officer who will read these applications sent by His Excellency the Viceroy. But there we find that there is a second grade or third grade clerk who simply puts on a printed memo. without any officer reading that appeal and sends it back to the Agent. The Agent, again, sends it back to the Divisional Superintendent and he, again, sends it back ultimately to the same clerk on whose report the man was discharged and on whose report the first appeal was dismissed, and now, on the report of the same clerk, again, the final appeal for mercy to His Excellency the Viceroy is also disposed of.

This is really the prevalent practice. Is it not all farce? Is it not injustice? I daresay, I am not entirely familiar with the internal working, but this, I believe, is the correct picture which has been told to me repeatedly by persons who have been the victims of these appeals and I shall be glad if gentlemen, who have first-hand information, will enlighten me on this point, and probably, nobody here has got first-hand information, because, none of the Members of the Railway Board ever read the appeals of these persons.

Mr. C. P. Colvin (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I should like to say in reply to my Honourable friend that every appeal that comes to the Railway Board is seen by some officer.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: I said that this application is sent to the Agent with a printed memo. signed by a clerk. Is it correct or not?

Mr. C. P. Colvin: No, Sir; it is not correct that it is sent back by a second or third grade clerk.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: Then I should very much like that the Honourable gentleman should make a statement and I shall be very glad to change my opinion after knowing the true facts. But the general impression in the country is what I am giving expression now. This has created a feeling of great insecurity among employees. In old days, there used to be a practice that an advance copy was sent to the Railway Board, but now they have issued an instruction that strict disciplinary action will be taken if an advance copy is sent. So if an appeal application is withheld by subordinates, there will probably be no way for finding out whether the application was or was not withheld, and I hope, when my Honourable friend, Mr. Colvin, gets up, he will also reply to this point as to whether such instructions have recently been issued or not, and what machinery exists for finding out whether the applications of individuals are withheld.

While we were discussing the question of the Statutory Railway Authority in London, the point was raised as to why so many questions were being asked on the floor of this House. Sir Henry Burt, a late President of the Railway Board, pointed out that in his time the letters written by any person to the Railway Board and letters written by any Member of a Legislative Council on any matter received careful consideration. The practice of the present Railway Board is just the reverse, and I ask, is it or is it not a fact that the Railway Board issued a circular in September, 1933, saying that any representation from Members of the Assembly or Council of State should not be considered by any Railway Authority? I should like to be told on the floor of this House whether it is a fact or not. If the Members of this Assembly are to be treated in this way that any representation of ours should not be considered, then what is the use of our being here and discussing railway problems? My friends on this side have been laying great stress on the fact that we will lose all control when we create the Railway Authority; but this is the value of the powers which we now possess. I have no reason to doubt my information. It is tested by my experience. The way by which I tested its accuracy is that, whenever I write to any railway official I invariably get a reply, if that official happens to be known to me; but if I write to any officer whom I do not know personally, I never get any reply. This forces me to the conclusion that the statement I made is correct. But I like to know whether it is a fact that such a circular was issued.

Coming now to appeals of officers there we have a circular that the Railway Board must forward the appeals to the Secretary of State. But, in practice, the appeals of non-Asiatic officers, who have been appointed by the Secretary of State himself, are not withheld; but I should like to know how many of such appeals were withheld in the case of officers who were Asiatic, belonging to the Anglo-Indian or any other community. I say that the system of appeal now prevalent in the Railway Department is very defective; and, I think, if they claim to be placed on the same level as other Departments of the Government, then it is not too much to request that they should follow the same system as is prevalent in other Departments. After all, there is security of tenure in Government service; but nobody can say that there is that security of tenure in the services of the Railway Department. A drastic change is necessary.

[Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad.]

I will finish by suggesting that if Government really desire that justice should be done and that the privilege of appeals is a real privilege, then they ought to appoint in the Railway Board a Special Officer and that Officer should not be a railwayman, but he should be a civilian with judicial experience, because, whatever may be said about civilians, I think the Indian civilian has very great merits, and is one in whom one can always trust. I say a civilian ought to be appointed to the Railway Board to listen to all these cases of appeals, and I believe that in the Agents' offices also there should be a person of very good status who should attend to all these appeals on behalf of the Agent and who should have powers to call for the papers from the authority which discharged them. He should be able to consider the charges and defence and should be in a position to form his own judgment. He should be a judicial officer. If such an officer with powers to call for all papers is appointed, I am sure that about 75 per cent. of the grievances of the railway employees will disappear. The Government should create a sense of security among the employees and they should pay serious attention to this grievance. With these words, I beg to move my amendment.

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs 100."

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to my Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, for raising the question of the general grievances of the employees. He himself has dealt with one of those grievances, namely, the grievance as regards appeals. This question of grievances and appeals are correlated: if there are grievances, there is need for appeals. I shall, therefore, deal with the grievances and how appeals made are treated by the Railway Authorities.

The greatest grievance of the Indian railwaymen at present is that about 50,000 of them have lost their employment. Employment is the first necessity of all employees, especially of employees that belong to the class from which our railwaymen are derived. Unfortunately the Government of India are following a policy by which employment is becoming difficult. I suggested some days ago that the Government of India should follow a policy by which more employment will be created. I suggest to them that at least in the Railway Department they should try their very best, in the interests of those employees who have lost their employment, to create employment. I suggest to them that they should undertake new construction of railways: I should also suggest to them that, instead of purchasing stores from foreign countries, they should start railway industries

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member must confine himself to the question of appeals: that is the motion before the House.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: On a point of order, Sir: with the permission of the Government, I included in this particular question the general grievances also.

An Honourable Member: How can Government give that permission?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: There is no question of the wording of the motion: it is up to the Member who moves to say as to what his meaning is: my friend, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, had very clearly stated that his object was, to raise the general question of the grievances.

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member cannot do that when the thing is quite clear. The question is about the system of appeals; the grievance which the Honourable Member is now putting forward before the House does not come within the terms of that. The Chair must ask the Honourable Member to confine himself to the question raised by the motion.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I request you to consider this question? This is not a Resolution of which any notice is given: it is a motion and the Honourable Member, out of courtesy to Government, tells them what he proposes to speak about: the Honourable Member has now definitely stated that he wants to raise the whole question

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): The debate must proceed according to the terms of the motion, because there are a number of motions before the House and each one relates to a particular object. This one relates to the object of raising the question of the system of appeals, and so the Chair cannot allow the Honourable Member to wander into other questions which may be a matter of grievances as against the Railway Authorities: therefore, the Chair would ask him to confine himself to the system of appeals.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I absolutely bow to your ruling. At the same time, I wish to draw your attention to this fact: I am not questioning your ruling at all. But the fact is this: we can give notice of a motion for cut without even stating anything, and neither the Government nor anybody can compel us to do that.

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): The Chair has given its ruling.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: All right: I do not propose to speak at all.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, the right of appeal is a most valuable right given to an aggrieved person. In a big organization like that of the railways, this right of appeal is still more valuable, because it gives a sense of security to the employees, and ultimately it leads to contentment in the service. The way in which the right of appeal is exercised by the employees shows what great importance they attach to this right, but the way in which these appeals are treated by the railway officials show what little value they attach to this right. I will illustrate my point by specific instances.

First of all, I want to bring to the notice of this House that about 25 per cent. of the questions that are put on the floor of this House relate to the grievances of the railway employees, and, if we take into consideration the many questions which are disallowed by the Department on the ground that they are not in the public interest, but that they relate to individual cases, then we can safely say that about 50 per cent. of the questions that are given notice of relate to the Railway Department where injustice has been done to the employees. However, taking the case of the question that I put this morning and which was answered by the

[Sardar Sant Singh.]

Honourable the Financial Commissioner for Railways, the House will see how much importance is attached by the railway officials to these appeals. This is a case relating to one Sayad Basharatullah, a guard of the Lahore Division. He was discharged on the 21st January, 1928. He sent up five appeals, one after another. I do not know how many appeals are allowed by the Department, but the fact remains that this particular individual sent up five appeals, one on the 28th July, 1927, the second was on the 1st January, 1928, the third was on the 6th November, 1928, the fourth was on the 21st November, 1928, and the fifth was on the 3rd December, 1928. All these appeals were summarily rejected without going into the merits of the question whether he was rightly discharged or not. Then he preferred an appeal to the Railway Board on the 23rd September, and also sent a forward copy to the Secretary of the Railway Board, and one copy to the Agent's office for being forwarded to the Railway Board. It dawned upon the Agent then that there was something serious and the facts were going to the notice of the Railway Board. This appeal met with a better fate. The guard was allowed leave for six months with pay. The Railway Authorities had been refusing him redress so far, though, according to this order, he was entitled to it under a circular of the Department. Then he put forward another series of appeals. On the 24th January, 1930, he put in an appeal, and again he made another appeal on the 24th March, 1930, praying that his case did not fall within that circular, that he did not deserve the six months' leave, but that he should be re-employed. Then the railway officials concerned felt that that circular did not apply to him and so they granted the man leave of 26 months with pay. Now, this man comes forward with a grievance and says: "If my appeal had been disposed of in accordance with the rules of the Department on the first day,—all this time, that is three years, has practically been wasted—I could have been re-employed in another category." Ultimately he comes up to this House and gets certain questions asked. The answer is known to the House. It is to the effect that the Railway Board has not issued any such circular for maintaining the register. The supplementary questions disclosed that the information given to this House was not correct. As usual, the N. W. Railway supplies wrong information to the Railway Board, and the Railway Board in turn supplies wrong information to Members of this House. Sir, this is not the first complaint of its kind. I shall deal with another case now, and this case will also show how valuable is the right of appeal and what a great check it exercises upon the arbitrary interpretations of the circulars of the Railway Board by the authorities of the N. W. Railway.

This House is very much familiar with the questions that have been put about travelling ticket collectors on the N. W. Railway. First of all, orders were issued that this cadre had been abolished. According to rules, if a cadre is abolished, people concerned can be discharged without notice, but in this particular case these travelling ticket collectors were made special ticket examiners and were transferred to that cadre, but their emoluments were cut down. Well, they exercised their right of appeal, and they said: "Here you say that our cadre has been abolished, but the only thing you have done is to have changed our designation from travelling ticket collectors to special ticket examiners, while the duties are exactly the same as the duties we were doing from 1923-25". Now, their appeal was not heard. They sent another appeal, and that too was not heard. Then they made a series of appeals, and they came down and waited in deputation on the

Railway Board. Then the Railway Board thought that there was some force in the contention of these people, and so a certain option was offered to them. In that option the Agent of the North Western Railway had put down a further condition that they should forego their right of compensation of all sorts, and that they should either accept or reject the option within 24 or 48 hours. They could not do that, and so again a separate representation was sent with facts and figures pointing out that, according to the rules framed by the Railway Board, their emoluments could not be reduced. The rule in question was this:

“Travelling Ticket Collectors are classed as Traffic Train Staff, and permitted under the orders of the Manager, to draw the allowance referred to in clause (C) to (E) of paragraph 359. It is, however, left to the discretion of the Manager to grant or refuse all or any of these allowances, but whatever allowance is to be given should be determined by the Manager at the time the person is engaged.”

Now, Sir, this is a very important condition. Legally, so far as I can interpret the law, the Railway Authorities could not have changed the emoluments of these people, they could not interfere with the allowances they were getting, because these allowances were granted to them at the time they were engaged. They could exercise their option at the time of their engagement. What the Railway Department could do was to continue or withhold these travelling allowances when new persons were engaged for the same duties, but how on earth the Railway Department could take away this right, which was already vested in them, is not clear to me. For three years they have been fighting. My submission is that if the vagaries of the Department continue as they are today, there is really no sense of security. It is more a case of nepotism than a case of doing justice to any employee of the Department.

These are two illustrative cases which I wanted to bring to the notice of this House, and I am sure the House will see the injustice that is done to the employees by the Railway Department by not adhering to the rules framed by themselves for their subordinates. So, the suggestion made by Dr Ziauddin is very sound, namely, that, instead of leaving these matters to the prejudice of the railway employee, a senior official should be deputed to look into the grievances of the employees and hear their appeals and decide them in accordance with the rules and circulars issued by the Railway Department. I support the motion.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): My one reason for intervening in this debate, apart from my desire to support this motion, is to place before the House, if I can, my views on the question of appeals as practised in the Railway Administrations of India. Before I do so, I feel that I must pay a tribute to the Honourable Member and the Members of the Railway Board for their courtesy whenever I have addressed them on matters of appeal, etc. I say that I have received in my sixteen years' experience as a public man dealing closely with railway matters, every courtesy from the Railway Board and Railway Agents and that they have listened to appeals from me. That is, however, one marked exception,—the present Agent of the East Indian Railway who has refused to listen to grievances from me for Indians. Sir, I do not blame the Railway Board. The Railway Board has issued very comprehensive orders dealing with all forms of appeals. The fault lies mainly with the Railway Agents and their under officers. These Railway Agents have acquired a habit, peculiar to themselves, which, in practice, implies that they please themselves whether

[Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney.]

they obey the Railway Board's order or not. This is daily evidenced in the multiple ways in which Railway Agents have interpreted orders of the Railway Board, and I think the Railway Board themselves have before them evidence in Mr. Hassan's report in which he candidly states that the Railway Agents do not carry out the orders of the Railway Board. Therefore, when we blame the Railway Board, we are not hitting the proper target. It is the Railway Agents and their officers who are mainly to blame. What happens? The Railway Board issues orders, the Railway Agents pass them on to Heads of Departments, the Heads of Departments pass them on to the Divisional Heads and Deputies, and they in turn pass them on to the lower officers and subordinates, and often times you find the Loco Foreman the judge and the accuser of a driver or a fireman who had been punished by him and in all cases he is supported by his higher officers, till you finally come down to, what my Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin, has immortalised here, the ubiquitous clerk in the railway office. This is a daily occurrence. The opportunity of a subordinate to appeal, then, becomes an absolute fiasco, a *sin-ecure*. A man is discharged for some reason or other, rightly or wrongly. Say he is discharged by a senior scale officer. That senior scale officer, before discharging him, has consulted the Divisional Superintendent or the Deputy Mechanical Engineer or some such officer who has appointed the subordinate. Where does the appeal of that subordinate lie? Not to the senior scale officer who discharged him, but to the one who has appointed him in office, *i.e.*, the Divisional Officer, but he is the one who has already agreed to his discharge on the recommendation of his under officer. Of what use is it to give a man a right of appeal not to the officer who discharged him, but to the officer who appointed him when both are of one mind. It is very extraordinary how the word "discharge" includes within itself a lot of crimes for which the officer has not got the courage to dismiss an employee. He discharges him, because it is a convenient way of getting rid of an undesirable subordinate. Remember, if the man is dismissed, he can appeal to the Agent, if he is deprived of any money *e.g.*, his Provident Fund, bonus, etc., he has an appeal to the Railway Board. This is the absurdity of the right of appeal, but this is being practised day in and day out for many years. The result is that the Railway Administration in certain railways is seething with discontent. This discontent is solid, though hidden and deep down, because, today, the competition of life is so strenuous that the harassed employee remains silent rather than lose his bread and butter. Believe me, I am not drawing a black picture when I say that in certain departments on many railways the picture I have drawn is a true one.

The extraordinary part of it is that Members of the Legislative Assembly
 4 P. M. are prohibited from having anything to do with railway servants under the Railway Servants' Conduct Rules. Though railway employees have a right to vote for their Members on the Legislative Assembly they are deprived of the right of coming to them with their complaints. One would like to know why this state of affairs exists? Why is it that this discontent remains and has remained for so many years and on railways only? It did not exist when these State Railways were Company-managed. Then we seldom heard of these disputes. The point is that in those days the railway officials were the *Ma-Baps* of railway employees. The railway officials knew them well, and personally listened to their grievances. Today things are different, for you have to go through

a labyrinthine channel of communication regarding appeals, so that it is almost impossible for anybody to reach the Railway Board. Then, again, another fact remains. There is not the faintest doubt—I say this with all respect to the railway officer who is hard worked and I have no desire to belittle his technical qualifications and ability, but I do submit that he lacks a proper sense of equity and logic. Indeed he has not got a judicial mind. He cannot judicially enquire into these cases with that fineness of logic and equity which is so necessary to form a sound judgment. And, again, he is faced with a most extraordinary and unfortunate social position in his life. The social life of the railway officials is peculiar in that they are huddled together in a small station, they live near each other, they meet each other every evening, so closely in their clubs and houses that it is bound to have a reaction on his mentality regarding justice and equity, with the result that it is seldom a senior officer has the courage to alter the recommendation or opinion of his junior officer against a subordinate. The result is that the subordinate has to suffer and go to the wall. His social life is such, his environments are so peculiar, that it is almost impossible for him to act otherwise. I do not say that he wants to be unjust, but conditions are so peculiar to railway official social life. This does not obtain in other civil departments. I only mention this because it shows the need for some one with a judicial mind, *e.g.*, an *ex-Railway* official, to enquire into these matters, apart from the need of technical knowledge necessary for derailment or a break down of engines. I am not talking of such cases. I am confining my remarks to appeals from punishments. *En Passant!* I ask: why is it that it is only on railways that this discontent prevails? In the other Departments of the Government of India and in the Provincial Governments we seldom find any such complaints. This House is absolutely silent on them. If you analyse the questions asked in this House, you will find that nine-tenths of them relate to railway matters and most of them refer to discontent and displeasure at the way the railwaymen have been treated by officials.

Let me now follow up an appeal after it has been submitted. A man sends up an appeal. He receives a reply that his appeal cannot be upheld. He asks that the appeal be sent up to a higher authority. He is confronted with the appeal rules and is told that his appeal is withheld and it cannot go up. I do not know if that is a fair way of treating an employee's application. The rules state, if he has got ten years' service or over, his discharge must be subject to certain formalities. There must be an inquiry. A charge sheet must be framed and the man must be given an opportunity to defend himself. I know they do this in some cases, but I also know of cases in which the appeal rules have been absolutely ignored and that man has no remedy. Suppose an employee does influence somebody, say, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and that somebody approaches a higher official and that higher official interferes in the matter and says "I cannot alter the order" Now, say, somebody else interferes. The railway official thinks that the man is becoming a nuisance and he is told: "If you are not satisfied, the remedy is in your hands. You can resign". But suppose a subordinate succeeds, *i.e.*, he appeals to the Railway Board or to the Viceroy, and the Railway Board makes inquiry. I know they have done so in some cases, I can vouch for that myself. They find that the punishment awarded to an employee has been excessive or wrong. What happens to that man? I say this with great restraint and pain, but, I say this with justification and with all respect.

[Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney.]

(I am thankful to say that it does not happen so often now.) I say, that man's life is made a veritable Hell. He is made to feel that he has scored and I know a case in which a man has been made to feel that. The man absolutely resigns in disgust. Now, I am happy to say that these things do not happen so often with the present Railway Board. I take my hat off to the present Railway Member for the just way in which he handles most cases. Indeed he has gone out of his way to help such cases as he said on the floor of this House, but this has happened. These men are still suffering this injustice and there must be a remedy for this. The remedy is in the hands of the Railway Board. The Railway Agents say that discipline must be maintained and the prestige of the railway official must be maintained at all costs. I agree, but this discipline is being carried too far, often to the extent of saying "Brutus has spoken. Let no dog bark". But is that the way of running a commercial undertaking such as our railways? What is the result? The result today is that the men are dissatisfied. I am not talking of any particular community. I am talking from my wide experience of railway matters. What is the remedy? I say to the Railway Board, "Overhaul the appeal rules. Improve them and make your Agents obey these rules". I know railway employees have now a better chance of getting redress, but this is not enough. We in this House have frequently defeated Government on the question of a demand for a Complaints or Grievance Committee. We have asked the Government to have some such Department attached either to each railway or to have an additional Member of the Railway Board employed exclusively for the settlement of appeals from State Railway employees. I am not referring to petty appeals. I am referring to important appeals on which a man's bread and butter depend. Let there be a complaints or an inquiry department in every railway and to that department let the settlement of these matters be relegated. I do believe that if the appeal rules are so radically modified or improved, so that every employee may feel a real sense of security of service, this motion, moved by my Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin, will have served a very useful purpose. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize this fact. I have indulged in some home truths today. I have done so with no disrespect to the Railway Board, for I again repeat that I have received courtesy and every attention to do justice to the matters I have brought to their notice, and so I hope the Railway Board will take my remarks in the right spirit. To prove my facts, let the Railway Board call upon the Agents to report the numbers of appeals that have been upheld, by the higher authorities, and, lastly, to see that justice to the employees is not subordinated to upholding the prestige, the *issat* of the officer.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Sir, I shall be as brief as possible, as I find many of my non-official colleagues are getting up to speak. I will confine myself exactly to the description given here, namely, "the system of appeals". My friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney, has clearly shown how this system requires improvement and revision. The railway organisation is a very big organisation. It employs a large number of people, both labourers and clerks as well as subordinate men. All of them come under the constant supervision of their superior officers who often times err on the side of discipline and who are sometimes inclined to listen to reports which have no leg to stand upon. I do not propose to take up individual cases and I know a large number of them; nor do I propose to approve of the description which probably Colonel Gidney gave in regard to the

State Railways. I do not think that description is altogether non-applicable to the Company-managed railways. I believe there is more difficulty in the Company-managed railways than in the State-managed railways. "Seething discontent" was the description by Colonel Gidney. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction among the employees in the Company-managed railways. Drastic action is not so frequently taken as it is sometimes quickly taken without adequate inquiry or on the prejudice of certain of the officers of the railways. I shall tell you how this prejudice works. It is a very sad thing to say or to go into particular cases on the floor of this House. This prejudice can work against a very honest and very efficient employee, I regret to say, even on political grounds. If he has a relation who is an advanced politician holding advanced views and who sometimes stays with him or had stayed with him in the past, a prejudice is created against him. That man is persecuted almost to the extent of leaving the railway. There is no other alternative. I do not want to give any case.

Now, then take the case of the labour employees and labour disputes. Probably my friend, Mr Joshi, would develop it on some other occasion showing how these labour disputes come up, how they are settled, how sometimes an appeal is necessary either by the labour men directly or through their accredited agencies. Even among labour employees, sometimes there occurs "seething discontent", resulting strikes, but here I must say that in the case of the Madras labour dispute about which I put a large number of questions in the House, the Government very promptly interfered and I must also say that the Agent of the Madras Railway equally promptly looked up their grievances. Of course there was an interval of disturbance, but he looked up their grievances and tried to conciliate them so far as he could.

Sir, I should not take much of the time of the House. I spoke in a very general way, but I would ask the Honourable the Railway Member, if possible, to instruct all the Company-managed railways to be a little more generous in regard to dealing with their employees, especially those employees with whom they are dissatisfied, and in the matter of appeals.

Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural). Sir, the system of appeals is a standing grievance in the Railway Department. The appeals are really no appeals. In the existing system, the manner of appointment is not so objectionable as the manner of listening to appeals. In practice, the authority responsible for the dismissal of servants is also the authority for disposing of appeals. Practically the same clerk, on whose initial note dismissal orders are issued, also writes the note on the application for appeal. This method of appeals has produced a great dissatisfaction amongst the staff, both subordinates and officers. It is, therefore, highly desirable that a Special Officer with necessary assistants and staff should be appointed at the Agent's office to listen to all these appeals. The appeals of the officers may either be heard by the Public Service Commission or by the Railway Board, in the latter case a Special Officer should be appointed at the railway who should not be eligible to any other appointment in the Railway Department. The application for appeals should be forwarded departmentally, but the Department should not be empowered to withhold the appeals.

It happens, and not infrequently, that the appeals of employees are withheld for indefinite time by the immediate authority and they are not forwarded to superior officers. The poor employees are very much handicapped. Even if the appeals are forwarded, then there exists no branch

[Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore.]

in the Agent's office to deal with them. The usual practice is that the appeal is sent back to the officer who passed the dismissal or punishment order. This officer forwards it to his own head of the branch concerned, who, in his turn, sends it to the clerk on whose initial note the dismissal or punishment order was issued. The same clerk writes a note on the appeal that he sees no reason whatever to interfere. This note goes up to the Agent's office and then comes down again to the poor employee. It moves up and down four times, but not a single man in the whole channel ever reads the appeal or looks into the case except the clerk who had the file with him. Unless a special department is organised, I am afraid, nothing can be done.

Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my friend, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad. I quite admit that the rules relating to appeals as are to be found on paper are quite all right, but so far as the observance of those rules is concerned, it is nothing more than a mere eye-wash. My Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, just now cited a case in which the victim preferred his appeal five times, and in the course of his speech my Honourable friend exclaimed: "I do not know how many times these men are allowed to prefer their appeals!" My answer to his exclamation would be: "practically not even one worth the name".

My Honourable friend, Mr. Colvin, in answer to Dr. Ziauddin's statement, said that if an appeal ever went to the Railway Board, it was heard by the Railway Board, but I beg to submit that the word "if" is very significant; practically speaking, it is on very rare occasions that an appeal is allowed to come before the Railway Board. On the present occasion I will be speaking specially of one particular Division, *viz.*, the Dinapore Division. During recent years, there have been a very large number of discharges. I have collected here more than a dozen, though I am not going to tire this House at this far end of the day by citing them all. I shall cite only two or three instances out of them. In none of these cases has a regular course of appeal been allowed, and even if an appeal has been allowed, the decision made by the higher authorities has never been given effect to.

I will cite the case of Mr. H. N. Sinha, Head Master of the Dinapore Railway School, who was discharged by the Committee. The Divisional Superintendent refused an interview to him and his appeal was rejected by the Agent. Sir George Rainy ordered his re-appointment, but after his retirement, the orders were ignored by the Agent on the false plea that he had attained the age limit, although he was 53 years of age at the time of his discharge and 54 years of age when Sir George Rainy passed orders. (Hear, hear.) There has never been an age limit for school teachers, and long after the discharge of Mr. Sinha, the head Persian teacher of the Dinapore School retired at the age of 70 years. (Laughter.) This illustrates what has been said by my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, that the Railway Board is not to be held responsible; it is the Agent and his subordinates that are really responsible. But I am not prepared, Sir, to absolve the Railway Board of their responsibility also. They should be more zealous in safeguarding the rights and privileges of their subordinate officers.

The next case which I shall narrate is that of P. Bharthi, Guard. The details of this case have appeared in the railwaymen's paper named the

Mazdoor of the 28th October. I have prepared a brief summary of the case and I think it would be worth while to go through it in one or two minutes so that the procedure which was followed in this case can be appreciated by Honourable Members. This gentleman applied for privilege leave for only one or two days, but the application was refused by the Station Master, Gaya. He sent a private telegram to the Divisional Superintendent as is usually done in all cases of emergency. Leave was granted, but Mr. N. K. Misra, Assistant Superintendent of Transportation, issued a warning to him for sending a wire direct to the Divisional Superintendent. He applied for an interview with the Divisional Superintendent regarding N. K. Misra's warning. He was then, as a result of this, called by Mr. N. K. Misra "*Badmash*" and "*rascal*" in the presence of Mr. G. P. Misra. His statement was submitted. The warning was confirmed by Mr. Misra, and he was told "nobody will protect you; not even the Secretary of State for India". . . . He was then suspended through a letter signed by B. V. Varma, Assistant Staff Superintendent who signed for the D. S. I want to draw the attention of this House to the fact that he was suspended by one B. V. Varma who signed for the Divisional Superintendent. Bharti explained the matter to the Divisional Superintendent. The Divisional Superintendent pressed for an apology and the withdrawal of allegations. The apology was made, but it was not regarded as wholly satisfactory. Charge sheet received before any inquiry was held. Asked to show cause "why your services should not be dispensed with" for indiscipline. Explanation submitted, but served with notice of discharge without any reply to the explanation submitted. Appeal to the Agent withheld by the D. S. (This is the point I should like to press.) Then, appeal to D. S. filed without any reply. What were the grounds for withholding the appeal by the D. S. to the Agent? The facts are these. The discharge order is made by one Mr. B. V. Varma who signs for the D. S. The D. S. sees that the man has a right to appeal to the Agent, because the rule says:

"Subject to the exception provided for in rule 10, an appeal from an order of discharge or dismissal shall lie only to the authority next above the officer passing the order."

So, when the Divisional Superintendent is the officer who practically passes the order, an appeal must lie to the Agent. But the Divisional Superintendent is not inclined to allow the man to go further. For all practical purposes the Divisional Superintendent and his staff play the part of autocrats in their offices. So he had recourse to a device. He says that the order of discharge was made not by Mr. Varma, who had signed for the Divisional Superintendent, but it was made by a third man, one Mr. Hamid. Sir, when I sign for somebody, can it be held that Sir Henry Gidney has signed it? From commonsense and from the practice that obtains in all public offices, it is a well known fact that the person for whom the signature is made is really intended to be the person making that signature. If it is held to have been signed by Mr. Varma, then the order of discharge is to be regarded as void, because the rule says:

"No officer lower than an officer of the senior scale or corresponding rank may pass an order of discharge."

It is for this reason, *i.e.*, to avoid this difficulty, that the Divisional Superintendent had recourse to a device and said that neither Mr. Varma nor he himself signed the order, but it was signed by Mr. Hamid.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: How did this third man come in?

Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen: That is a mystery which I could not solve. I approached one of the Members of the Railway Board who has since been nominated a Member of this House. I was very cordially received by him as my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, has often been received, but the matter is still exactly in the same position as it was then. Sweet words were of no avail. He was kind enough to make an inquiry. He wrote to the Agent and simply repeated to me what the Agent had said in reply. This is the reply that was given:

"In Guard Bharthi's case, the original order of discharge by the Transportation Officer of the Division, a copy of which has been forwarded to the Board by the Agent."

In the previous paragraph, he says:

"All letters from a Divisional Superintendent on the East Indian Railway issue as from the Divisional Superintendent either signed by himself or by some officer under his control for the Divisional Superintendent."

This, I should submit, is an astounding statement. If an authorised agent of Mr. Colvin receives a payment from one of his creditors and signs for Mr. Colvin, can Mr. Colvin deny that the payment has been really made? I think he cannot.

Mr. O. P. Colvin: Sir, I should like to make some remarks with regard to the case of Guard Bharthi about whom my Honourable friend has been speaking, because I dealt with his case.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member can speak when Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen has finished his speech unless he wants to make a brief personal explanation.

Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen: Sir, there have been so many cases and so many Honourable Members have been interested in them that more than 50 per cent of the questions put in this House relate to railway matters. I have given notice of such questions very often and if they are allowed, my Honourable friend, Mr. P. R. Rau, gives a very short answer often consisting of one short sentence, *viz.*, "I have called for certain information which will be laid on the table in due course". In this way, he avoids supplementary questions and their grievances cannot be ventilated.

Mr. P. R. Rau: Sir, I must protest against that insinuation. The Honourable Member should remember that when questions are asked, the information has got to be obtained from the railways for which ten days are allowed which is not sufficient in many cases. If Honourable Members will ask only for information which is within my personal knowledge, I shall certainly give it to them and reply to supplementary questions to the best of my knowledge.

Honourable Members: Why don't you get the order changed?

Mr. P. R. Rau: If you, Sir, are pleased to change the order and give us more time, I shall be pleased to obtain the necessary information and answer any supplementary questions that I may be in a position to answer.

Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen: I have almost finished my speech, Sir. My grievance is that the rules of appeal are all right, but in most cases an appeal is treated as a mere formality which it was never intended to be. In the rules it has been clearly laid down that "in no case and in no sense, is an appeal to be treated as a mere formality". So I say that the appeal should be listened to and there should be no insecurity of the service of the railway employees.

Mr. C. P. Colvin: Sir, I have only a very few words to say in connection with the case of Guard Bharthi with which my Honourable friend was dealing just now. My Honourable friend said that, in the misuse of the appeal rules, he did not hold the Board to blame, but he held the administrations to blame. But this particular case is an example in which I cannot agree with what he has said. In this case, the guard had no right of appeal to the Railway Board. My Honourable friend had written to the Board about this case and he interviewed me and I agreed as a special case that I would examine the matter. A report was called for from the East Indian Railway and the original papers also were called for. I went through them carefully, and I came to the conclusion that the Administration had been perfectly right in the disciplinary action which they had taken regarding this guard. I explained this personally to my Honourable friend. It is, therefore, an instance of a case in which the Administration was right and not wrong in the action that they took.

Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen: But how will my Honourable friend explain the novel procedure that the signature made for the Divisional Superintendent does not mean that it was his signature?

Mr. C. P. Colvin: I do not propose to go into that question now. I explained it to the Honourable Member when he saw me.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I am very glad, Sir, that an opportunity has been given to me on this occasion to express my views, because many questions are put by me in this House with regard to the rights of appeal by railway employees. Sir, I do not in the least agree with my learned friend, Pandit Satyendra Nath Sen, that the railway rules with regard to the appeals are all right. They are not. They are antiquated rules and ought to be revised. They are the rules which do not show where rightly appeals should lie and where they should not. Only the other day, this question cropped up here, and I asked the Honourable the Financial Commissioner to say whether he had revised the rules and whether he had gone through them. The reply was: "Find the rules in the Library and see for yourself". But, Sir, I may go and see for myself, but may I ask when were these rules framed and whether they have been revised afterwards, especially after so many instances have been given in this House to show that this appellate power which lies with the Railway Board lies only in exceptional cases and that it lies almost in all cases with the Agents. I have nothing to say adversely to the remarks of my Honourable and gallant friend, Colonel Gidney, for whom I have admiration. I have no enmity against him, I have no envy, but he himself may have envy. He said that the Board had been sympathetic and that the Board had always shown him courtesy and that was how he managed to get redress at their hands. That may be personal influence.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I am sorry to interrupt my Honourable friend, but I deny having said that. What I said was that I always received courteous treatment from the Railway Board and particularly from the Railway Board as it exists today and the Honourable Member in charge of Railways. I never said that I received satisfaction in all cases I represented to the Railway Board.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: In my humble opinion, it amounts to the same thing that I said. My Honourable friend did not put the whole case before the House. The whole case is this. I have at present in my possession representations by Anglo-Indian guards, Anglo-Indian Assistant Controllers and Anglo-Indian Travelling Ticket Examiners, all of them telling me that they have not been getting justice.

An Honourable Member: Not getting justice from Colonel Gidney.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I cannot say whether my Honourable and gallant friend, Colonel Gidney, has put forward the case of all his aggrieved Anglo-Indians before the Railway Board; if he had done so, he would have condemned the Railway Board.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: That supports me.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The Honourable and gallant Member may have been successful in getting a few grievances redressed, and he thereby feels flattered over that. But, Sir, we see men of his own community coming to us,—the Indian Members of the Assembly—and telling us all their grievances. I may submit to the House that I make no distinction between Indians and Anglo-Indians. (Applause.) When they ask for redress, I help them as much as lies in my power.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I can show my Honourable friend many cases in which I have gladly taken up the cause of Indians and obtained redress for them.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Then, we are both on the same platform. I have no time, otherwise I would have dilated on this point. My complaints are chiefly these. The rules ought to be revised. The rules are not adequate. They are such that many of the powers have been decentralised to the Agents. The Agent is given, so to say, a blank cheque and he is asked to decide in whatever way he likes. My second complaint is that the Board has to see whether those rules are in fact and in effect strictly followed by the Divisional Officers and the Agents. My third complaint is that the non-interference by the Railway Board ought to be condemned. Whenever we come to this House with complaints against the Railway Administration, we are told that the matter is within the competence of the Agent, and the Railway Board sits without doing anything in the matter. In all the Departments of the Government of India, justice requires that there ought to be an appeal, a second appeal and lastly a revision. Is there any such revisional power under these rules? Government have invariably answered that there is no revisional power in the Railway Board, not even any power of superintendence, they say. I must say in this connection, however, that it is very good of the Members of the Railway Board that we do get replies when we send cases to them for their consideration. Sometimes the Railway Board send for the papers, but they are not required to do so under

the rules. They may or may not send for them. Just recently I sent up one case to my Honourable friend, Mr. Colvin, and I drew his attention to the case of certain people who were discharged by the Agent on account of defective eye-sight of a particular standard. According to the rules, as I read them, and my Honourable friend also knows the rules, whenever people are discharged from the railways on account of defective eye-sight, they have to be given some other appointment where they can work with the eye-sight they then possess. I referred to the case of one Thakur Das, a station master on the North Western Railway, and there was the case of another man too. I pointed out to the Honourable Member, Mr. Colvin, that under the rules persons, who were prematurely retired on account of defective sight should be given some other appointment and also be entitled to passes if so retired. I must say, in fairness to my Honourable friend, that he gave me a courteous reply, but the result was the same, namely, that the matter was said to be within the competence of the Agent. I say that the Railway Board are an impotent body so far as the acts of the Agents are concerned. I, therefore, submit that the policy followed by the Railway Board of non-interference with the acts of the Agents should be modified and the rules should be revised in that regard. If the Honourable the Railway Member has got much work, I would suggest that he should take one or two Members of this House in consultation and then see whether the rules require revision or not. There should also be a provision for powers of superintendence. If the rules were revised in that direction, we would not get the sort of replies that we get now from the Government. There is that recent instance of one Mr. Varma who had taken upon himself the business of signing for D. S. and the trouble arose as to whose signature it should be taken to be for an appeal. I may say that in the Karachi Division every day such business is carried on by the Personal Assistant. In the House I gave to the Honourable Member a representation of the clerks showing that great harm has been done to them by the Personal Assistant because he generally withholds the appeals to the D. S.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Was that Personal Assistant a Muhammadan or a Hindu?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Whether a Muhammadan or a Hindu is no point. You heard the instance of a Hindu, and this is of a Muhammadan. There is no question of communalism here. I know that the Honourable Member, though dressed as a nationalist, always talks of communalism. The facts are there and my Honourable friend could verify these himself. I would appeal to my Honourable friend to discontinue this attitude of Hindu *versus* Muslim and to disabuse himself of this idea, because this kind of quarrel amongst us has given the Government a handle to answer questions on the floor of the Assembly in the manner they do at present, with the result that many grievances are not redressed. Reverting to what I was saying, what happened was that an appeal was sent to the D. S. at Karachi. He refused to entertain this appeal and asked the party to go to the Personal Assistant who had made the order. When they went to the Personal Assistant, he withheld the appeal. Is this justice? In such cases the aggrieved party cannot go to the Agent, because they cannot get direct representation, and when we come to this House to represent their grievances, we are told, "the matters are within the competence of the Agents". Besides

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

there are many questions which are disallowed by the Assembly Department as pertaining to individual persons. Even if some questions are admitted, the difficulty of getting satisfactory replies from the Government arises. I submit it is a very hard case, and the rules require to be changed for giving more power of supervision to the Railway Board, and the policy of non-interference should end.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, I think I may begin by assuring the House that we on this side are as anxious as Honourable Members opposite to see that fair, equitable and just treatment is meted out to the employees of the railways. We recognise that no Administration can be successful unless the rank and file of its employees feel that they can be sure of getting fair and just treatment. In regard to this particular matter, Sir, I feel some difficulty, because certain Members have expressed the view that the rules are perfectly all right, but it is the administration of the rules that is wrong; others on the other hand have attacked the rules themselves. I should like at the outset to draw the attention of the House to one fact and that is that it would be utterly impossible, without courting the breakdown of the Administration, to permit appeals on any larger scale to the Railway Board. The House will, I am sure, realise that when we are dealing, on State-managed railways, with something like 400,000 employees, it would be utterly impossible for us to enlarge the opportunities for appeal of employees to the Railway Board. They have, as a matter of fact, under the rules, a right of appeal to the Railway Board in the most serious cases: that is to say, cases in which dismissal entails forfeiture of their provident fund.

Now, Sir, we come to the question of the manner in which the Railway Administrations work the appeal rules. I understood my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, who, I gathered from what he has said, has supplanted my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, as the representative of the Anglo-Indian community (Laughter) and as the custodian of their rights (*Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney*: "Question.")—I merely said that I gathered that from what he said,—I understood my Honourable friend to suggest that there should be not merely second appeals, but that the field of appeal should be enlarged still further. I can assure my Honourable friend that we should have to have a very much enlarged Railway Board if we acceded to a suggestion of that description. Nor do I feel that any useful purpose would thereby be served. I can assure him that there have been many cases in which though the actual rules did not permit of an appeal to the Railway Board, nevertheless, in view of the representations made to the Railway Board and because the Railway Board are desirous of seeing that these rules are really worked properly in practice, they have called for papers and have gone into them.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I gave an instance of that myself.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Quite so and I can tell my Honourable friend something more. I myself have, on more than one occasion, despite the fact that no appeal lay to me, called for the papers and gone into them. And I should like to say that in all cases,—there have not been many, I admit, so far as I am concerned I cannot call to my

recollection more than perhaps two such cases in which I myself have looked into the papers,—but I can say that on all these occasions the Board and I were satisfied that the Agent had gone with the utmost care into the details of the cases concerned.

Now, Sir, in regard to the rules themselves I should like to say that the rules are not antediluvian and antiquated as suggested by my friend, Mr Lalchand Navalrai. They were issued in 1929 after a discussion which my predecessor had with the All-India Railwaymen's Federation. Later on, the All India Railwaymen's Federation made further suggestions, and, as a result of those suggestions, the rules were again revised in 1930 and they stand today in the form which was decided on after the consultation with the Federation on that occasion. Certain further amendments are at present under consideration of the Board; and I trust, Sir, that as a result of the further consideration which these rules are now undergoing, the staff may get further protection. I cannot undertake to guarantee that officers on the railway will have no cause for complaint in future. All I can assure the House is that the Railway Board have definitely on occasions made inquiries, I have personally gone into matters myself on more than one occasion and on those occasions we have had no *prima facie* evidence that appeals were not being properly dealt with. I hope, Sir, in view of what I have said in regard to the fact that the rules are being re-considered, my Honourable friend will withdraw his motion.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: Sir, I never intended to bring any reflection on any of the railway officers here or on the running lines, many of whom are my personal friends. I knew that there are certain grievances among the employees which are genuine grievances. No doubt they are your employees but they are our voters (Laughter), and it is impossible for us, in the discharge of our public duties, not to pay attention to their genuine grievances which are creating feelings of insecurity. But, in view of the assurance given by the Railway Member, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn

Condition of State Railway Press Employees.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100"

to discuss the condition of the State Railway Press employees. My purpose is to draw the attention of the Railway Authorities to the grave situation in the Railway Press in Calcutta. They have submitted many memorials and the facts are well known to the Railway Board, but unfortunately they have not still been favoured with any reply. Within the two or three minutes that are at my disposal, I wish to deal with the main points. Their first complaint is about the delay in the payment of salary; the second complaint is that promotions and increments are often withheld arbitrarily; the third is that operatives are often summarily dismissed or fined on flimsy grounds; fourthly, the members of the Association are unnecessarily harassed; and, fifthly, grant of passes is delayed. They pray that there should be only one grade with a graduated scale of pay and an efficiency bar at a certain stage, and that increments and promotions should be automatic according to a time-scale; that all the industrial staff, such as compositors, binders, machinemen, etc., should get all leave

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

benefits like the clerical and subordinate supervising staff of the Press and that their status should be the same as that of the superior non-workshop staff of the railway; that all persons demoted in the press should be immediately placed in their former posts and pay; that the salary of the operatives should be paid on the first date of the month.

The main grievance is that the several State Railway Presses were amalgamated with a view to effecting retrenchment, and what we find is that though the mechanical workers and the artisans have been retrenched to a great extent, there has been actually an addition to the superior staff. Different reasons were given by the authorities at different times. In 1931, there was a heavy retrenchment. Mr. Mackenzie, the Deputy Superintendent of the East Indian Railway Press, stated in a deposition before the Court of Inquiry in 1931:—

"The reason for discharge was to comply with the recommendations of Mr. A. F. Salter appointed as Special Officer to inquire into the scheme of reorganising the printing office. There was no other reason in January."

But the Court of Inquiry found that the reason was not true. The number of operatives actually in the staff was much less than that recommended by Mr. Salter and all the press workers, who appealed to the Court, were reinstated, and the Court remarked that—

"these men have a genuine grievance in having been retrenched."

But numerous others who could not appeal in time through ignorance were not reinstated.

Again, there was another retrenchment in 1932, and the reason given was that the work had decreased considerably. But it was pointed out that, not only had the work not decreased, but on several occasions the operatives had to work overtime and services of men from other departments had to be requisitioned to cope with the work. But, in spite of this fact, the poor workers were not reinstated.

Then, again, in 1933, another retrenchment took place. This time the plea was that it was an economic measure. To run the Press more economically, it was necessary to reorganise the Press, and, as a step towards it, both the Eastern Bengal Railway Press and the East Indian Railway Press had to go amalgamated, and as a consequence, many of the staff were found to be surplus. But this economic reorganisation did not touch the highly paid supervising and clerical staffs of both the presses, all of whom found provision in the amalgamated Press. But unfortunately the economy demanded the sacrifice of about 40 operatives whose total income would not have exceeded Rs 1200 a year—a sum less than the pay of a Superintendent or a Deputy Superintendent.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member's speech; but his speed is so great that I cannot follow him.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: I know, Sir, that all the facts are before the Railway Authorities; and, if he wishes, the Honourable Member is still in a position to say that he will give sympathetic consideration to the matter. Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, this is not a case in which an appeal lies to the Railway Board; but I can assure my Honourable friend that, in view of the very special circumstances of this case, the Railway Board will look into the matter.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion, in view of the assurance given.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

First Class Railway Station for Cuttack.

Mr. B. Das: Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 100’—(First class Railway Station for Cuttack, which is going to be the Capital of the new Province of Orissa.)

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra: Sir, I support the motion brought forward by my Honourable friend, Mr B. Das.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, my Honourable friend has shown no grounds for his motion, and I regret, therefore, I am not able to give him any satisfactory reply.

Mr. B. Das: If the Honourable the Railway Member would become the Governor of my Province,—Orissa—he would know the grounds on which I moved my motion, as he will have to descend steps holding the handle bars of carriages. Raised platform and a first class station are required.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That the demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,45,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Railway Board’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 2—AUDIT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,95,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Audit’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No 3—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,60,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous expenditure’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 4—REFUNDS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Refunds’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 5—PAYMENTS TO INDIAN STATES AND COMPANIES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,37,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Payments to Indian States and Companies’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-A—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE OF STRUCTURAL WORKS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,45,75,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance of Structural Works’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-B—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY OF LOCOMOTIVE POWER.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 16,61,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance and Supply of Locomotive Power’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-C—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE OF CARRIAGE AND WAGON STOCK.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,63,75,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance of Carriage and Wagon Stock’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-D—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE OF FERRY STEAMERS
AND HARBOURS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 27,45,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance of Ferry Steamers and Harbours’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-E—WORKING EXPENSES—EXPENSES OF TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,30,75,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Expenses of Traffic Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-F—WORKING EXPENSES—EXPENSES OF GENERAL DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,58,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Expenses of General Departments’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-G—WORKING EXPENSES—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,07,90,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-H—WORKING EXPENSES—ELECTRIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,17,30,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Electric Service Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 7—WORKING EXPENSE—APPROPRIATION TO DEPRECIATION FUND.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,65,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 8—INTEREST CHARGES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,83,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Interest Charges'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 9—TEMPORARY WITHDRAWALS FROM DEPRECIATION FUND.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,33,22,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Temporary Withdrawals from Depreciation Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 11—NEW CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'New Construction'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 12—OPEN LINE WORKS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,22,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Open Line Works'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 26th February, 1934.

